

# Toward Figural Fantasy

## *The Representation of Consciousness in Modern American Fantasy Literature*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Hisvin's house had in its top floor a small room, the door and window shutters of which were all tightly barred from the inside so that a witness, if there could have been one, would have wondered how this barring had been accomplished in such fashion as to leave the room empty. (Leiber, *Swords* 201)

Will saw movement from the corner of his eye. Pale shapes gliding through the wood. He turned his head, glimpsed a white shadow in the darkness. Then it was gone. Branches stirred gently in the wind, scratching at one another with wooden fingers. Will opened his mouth to call down a warning, and the words seemed to freeze in his throat. Perhaps he was wrong. Perhaps it had only been a bird, a reflection on the snow, some trick of the moonlight. What had he seen, after all? (Martin 8)

Fritz Leiber's *The Swords of Lankhmar* featuring Hisvin's empty room was written in 1968. George R. R. Martin completed *A Game of Thrones* in 1996. Even though the two passages are here divorced from their narrative contexts, it is obvious that 28 years is not the only difference between them. In the Leiber passage, the narrator presents the story world from a very privileged position. Following a quick spatial transition from the house to the small room, the narrator proceeds to observe the room despite the fact that it is supposed to be empty of observers ("a witness, if there could have been one"). Leiber's narrator clearly has no misgivings about going where his characters cannot follow and observing what his characters cannot perceive. Indeed, there is an entire second paragraph of description by the narrator before characters finally enter the empty room, and even then the narrator forgoes the internal perspective of a character, maintaining instead his position as an outside observer (Leiber, *Swords* 201–02).

In the extract from Martin, the narrative perspective has been narrowed down to what Will sees and hears and thinks. The ghostly creatures are rendered in brief, almost impressionistic glimpses that reflect Will's vague perceptions ("Pale shapes gliding through the wood", "a white shadow in the darkness"). Furthermore, the narrative empathically echoes Will's refusal to accept what he saw or thought he saw ("Perhaps he was wrong. Perhaps it had only been a bird, a reflection on the snow, some trick of the moonlight."). The last sentence is practically a direct verbalization of his thoughts. It is clearly Will's rather than the narrator's consciousness that orients the narrative. Apart

from the third person reference, the narrator seems to lack presence entirely. (The slightly poetic quality of Will's perceptions could perhaps be attributed to the narrator rather than to Will himself, yet the overall perspective is clearly Will's.)

The difference between the two passages thus appears to be between the external and the internal, between omniscience and perspectivism, or, more specifically, between authorial narration and figural narration (i.e., character-mediated narration). As I will argue, this difference not only spans the two novels, but also describes a general shift in narrative technique that has gradually taken place in modern American fantasy during the three decades separating Leiber and Martin.

### **1.1. Aims and Methods**

What is remarkable about the academic study of this shift in narrative technique is that there seems to be none. The withdrawal of the authorial narrator and the emergence of subjectively mediated experience in modern fantasy narratives seems to have gone unnoticed. Now, I do not mean to suggest that fantasy scholars have been idle. To be sure, much work has been done in the field. In addition to the many volumes dedicated to particular authors and works (mostly to J. R. R. Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–55)) there are quite a few studies with more generic ambitions. Many combine a historical perspective with attempts to define the genre (e.g., Brian Attebery, Michelle L. Eilers, Richard Mathews, Michael Moorcock, Darko Suvin), but there are also largely historical approaches (e.g., Maxim Jakubowski, Brian Stableford), as well as more strictly ahistorical or formalist ones (e.g., Rosemary Jackson, Eric S. Rabkin, Roger C. Schlobin, Ann Swinfen, Tzvetan Todorov, Marshall B. Tymn et al.). Finally, we have numerous encyclopedias and bibliographies (e.g., *Fantasy Literature: A Core Collection and Reference Guide* (1979), *Supernatural Fiction Writers: Fantasy and*

*Horror I & II* (1985), *Fantasy Literature: A Reader's Guide* (1990), *Magill's Guide to Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature* (1996), *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1997), *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Fantasy: The Definitive Illustrated Guide* (1998), *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy* (2005)). There is even Gary K. Wolfe's excellent *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy: A Glossary and Guide to Scholarship* (1986).

However, as of yet nobody seems to have commented on the fundamental shift in the way characters' consciousness is represented and their experience narrated. Fantasy scholars may not have been idle, but neither have they been entirely in touch with their genre as far as its narrative techniques are concerned. I suspect scholars have been so busy debating what makes modern fantasy a distinct and unique literature that they have had neither time nor inclination to study areas where modern fantasy overlaps with other genres. Narrative perspective and the representation of consciousness are clearly two such areas. But if the aim is to arrive at a complete understanding of modern fantasy as a literary genre, an aim that is at least implicit in most discussions, then all facets of narrative merit a critical look: both those where fantasy differs from other genres and those where it coincides with them. How a story world is presented and how characters' experience is mediated are fundamental aspects of narrative meaning-making. Fantasy narratives are defined as much by such aspects as by the fantastic. Furthermore, focusing on such shared aspects has the added advantage of introducing new theoretical tools and vocabulary into the somewhat inbred field that is fantasy theory.

My aim in this thesis is to show how modern fantasy literature has shifted from classic omniscient narration toward a more intimate and subjective mode of rendering fictional

minds: from authorial narration toward figural narration. My analysis focuses primarily on a comparison between two novels, Leiber's *The Swords of Lankhmar* (1968) and Martin's *A Game of Thrones* (1996). I concentrate on narration, focalization, and the more closely textual techniques of psychonarration, interior monologue, and free indirect discourse. In conclusion, I present a rough chronological outline of the shift by reviewing sixteen further works that together span the last 70 years of modern fantasy. I summarize each work in terms of its use of the relevant narrative techniques, and follow up with a text excerpt that exemplifies this in a prototypical manner.

Even though this thesis covers only a small number of works from the two general categories of narrative involved in the shift, and concentrates mainly on the two novels mentioned above, my audacious assumption is that the differences between them suggest a general movement in the modern fantasy genre. Leiber's and Martin's ways of doing things are, of course, particular to them as authors, but the overall tendency toward authorial narration in Leiber and toward figural narration in Martin are, I claim, broadly representative of their times and environment. However, this does not mean that the authorial narrator has vanished from modern fantasy. Nor does it mean that the shift is over, or that everybody will eventually follow suit. It is not as though all modern fantasy has started to employ figural narration. Not only is it difficult to draw a clear line between the two kinds of narration, but different authors employ them to different degrees. Nevertheless, the general tendencies are there. I obviously cannot hope to validate my assumption in this thesis, as it would require a survey spanning dozen upon dozens of works, but I mean to at least offer a preliminary analysis of the shift.

For theoretical concepts on narrative and narrative situations, I draw primarily on F. K. Stanzel's *A Theory of Narrative* (1984) and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (2003). Rimmon-Kenan's book, together with Manfred

Jahn's superb web resource "Narratology: A Guide to the Theory of Narrative" (2005), serves as my primary source on focalization. Dorrit Cohn's *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (1983) remains the best study on psychonarration, interior monologue and free indirect discourse in prose narratives, and I use it extensively. Monika Fludernik's contributions to the study of free indirect discourse in *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction* (1993) also prove useful. While these are my main sources for the analytical sections, I use other critical and theoretical texts as necessary.

For those sections that touch on the genre of modern fantasy and the literary history relevant to the shift in technique, I use a variety of sources, none of which really stands out as more important than the others. However, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* and *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1993) have proven to be eminently useful general resources, and thus deserve to be mentioned here.

Finally, it should be noted that the following discussion concerns heterodiegetic<sup>1</sup> modern fantasy narratives only. This is for the simple reason that only heterodiegetic narrators can freely choose which character's consciousness to render, in what way, and for how long. Only heterodiegetic narrators can span the divide between authorial and figural narration, and thus only heterodiegetic narratives can be subject to shifts between the two. Furthermore, the present thesis focuses primarily on American heterodiegetic fantasy. I do, however, believe that the shift hypothesis is equally valid for modern British fantasy literature, for example.

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<sup>1</sup> In a heterodiegetic narrative, the narrator is not a character in the story but instead occupies a level that is ontologically above or outside the represented events (see Jahn N1.10.; Rimmon-Kenan 96). In a homodiegetic narrative, the narrator is also a character in the story (see *ibid.*). Heterodiegetic narratives are traditionally known as third person narratives, homodiegetic narratives as first person narratives. This latter distinction, however, has proven problematic (see Bal 22; Jahn N1.10.).

## 1.2. Defining Modern Fantasy

Fantasy is a notoriously elusive genre. There is no critical consensus over the definition of fantasy nor is there agreement about the body of works the term should cover (see Eilers 317–18; *Fantasy* 337; Wolfe, *Terms* xiii, 38). Most fantasy scholars seem to acknowledge this. In fact, it is common practice to open with the above disclaimer before moving on to one's own definition. Perhaps the only point that scholars agree upon is that fantasy literature deals with the impossible (or marvellous or fantastic or supernatural or extranatural or nonrational or unreal or whatever one chooses to call this nebulous quality). Gary K. Wolfe's minimal dictionary definition accordingly reads: "A fictional narrative describing events that the reader believes to be Impossible" (*Terms* 38). However, as Wolfe himself observes, not only is the term *impossible* imprecise, but the definition itself is hopelessly broad (*ibid.*). As it stands, it can be argued to include such genres as science fiction and horror (*ibid.*). Moreover, what the reader conceives as impossible depends, of course, on his or her historical and cultural environment (see Wolfe, "Encounter" 2–3). Wolfe's own solution is to expand the notion of impossibility in fantasy into an elaborate and somewhat obscure system of deeper meanings, ideational structures, affective and cognitive significances, and levels of belief (see Wolfe, "Encounter"). Wolfe is able to specify what he means by the impossible, but whether his scheme actually captures what fantasy literature is all about remains questionable.

However, the impossible is inescapable. C. N. Manlove, for example, mixes the impossible with the wondrous when he describes fantasy as a "fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms" (16–17). Ann Swinfen draws on Todorovian



vocabulary for her definition: “The essential ingredient of all fantasy is ‘the marvellous’, which will be regarded as anything outside the normal space-time continuum of the everyday world” (5). For Marshall B. Tymn et al., fantasy is “composed of works in which nonrational phenomena play a significant part. That is, they are works in which events occur, or places or creatures exist, that could not occur or exist according to rational standards or scientific explanations” (3). Jules Zanger sets fantasy against realism and naturalism, and views it as “defined by those aspects of reality it denies, by representations that are not merely improbable or untrue, as are common to all fictions, but patently false” (226). Similarly, Eric S. Rabkin posits “Fantasy” as the polar opposite of “Reality” (227), and describes fantasy as a genre whose defining characteristic is a continuous and “direct reversal of the ground rules of a narrative world” (213, see 37). Finally, there is *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* with yet another definition that draws on the impossible: “A fantasy text is a self-coherent narrative. When set in this world, it tells a story which is impossible in the world as we perceive it . . . when set in an otherworld, that otherworld will be impossible, though stories set there may be possible in its terms” (338).

One consequence of such an exclusive focus on the impossible is that much fantasy scholarship is founded on a romantic celebration and idealization of wonder and imagination (e.g., Attebery, Manlove, Mathews, Swinfen, Tolkien, Wolfe). Tolkien provides perhaps the best example of this when he describes fantasy literature and its ability to evoke strangeness and wonder as “a higher form of Art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent” (“Fairy-Stories” 45). The impossible emerges as a value in itself, and such imagination as produces and explores the impossible is seen to represent the highest form of creativity. This is especially true for studies that seek to defend fantasy (since such studies are typically more eager to

distinguish fantasy as distinct and unique). Moreover, the celebration of the impossible usually involves a diametric opposition between fantasy on the one hand, and realism and naturalism (or simply mainstream literature) on the other. This is somewhat puzzling since the same studies that celebrate the impossible often argue that fantasy is rather a reflection on the real than a departure from it.

The above approach is not only unwarranted but untenable. For one, celebrating fantasy as the high point of creativity effectively sidelines all other genres. Can we really say that realistic stories, for example, require less imagination in the telling than fantastic ones? Is the impossible truly a more difficult subject creatively than the mundane? Even more unfortunate is that this foregrounding of the impossible seems to narrow fantasy down to only one feature. The impossible is surely the feature that distinguishes fantasy from other genres, but it does not describe the breadth and depth of fantasy. It makes no mention of realistic characterization, human drama, beautifully balanced prose, skillfully spun free indirect discourse, or even gripping storytelling.

Finally, the classic opposition between fantasy and realism is misleading. It obscures the fact that even though fantasy narratives contain story worlds and story world elements that have little basis in everyday life, they nevertheless draw on the same literary conventions of realism as other modern novels.<sup>2</sup> Michelle L. Eilers's insight into the origins of modern fantasy is particularly valuable here: "One of the most significant features uniting the earliest modern fantasies is their employment of the narrative convention literary realism . . . the first writers of modern fantasy manifested a modern emphasis on the individual by developing original plots, particular characters,

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<sup>2</sup> By "realism", I mean the general aim to believably portray individual human experience. As such, "realism" makes no distinction between classic Realism and the psychological realism of the twentieth-century novel, for example.

and particular settings” (335, see 329). So, rather than glorify fantasy into a literary ghetto by celebrating the impossible, we should come up with a more inclusive approach rooted in a larger claim on the real.

For my present purposes, I shall use a slightly extended version of Eilers’s definition, and describe modern fantasy broadly as *a prose fiction genre composed of stories in which a magical or supernatural power typically plays a fundamental role, that are set either in a fantastically transformed version of our world or in an internally coherent otherworld, and that aim to create an illusion of reality.*<sup>3</sup> *Otherworld* is here understood to mean any autonomous story reality that is not a representation of the real world (e.g., Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Earthsea*, Tolkien’s *Middle-Earth*). An *internally coherent* otherworld is governed by logically consistent rules as opposed to arbitrary or nonsensical ones (see *Fantasy* 738, 847; Swinfen 3, 75–99; Tolkien, “Fairy-Stories” 46). The illusion of reality is achieved by focusing on particular human experience in a particular setting (Eilers’s “original plots, particular characters, particular settings” (329)). The internal coherence principle clearly works well with this aim.

In discussing the shift from authorial to figural narration, I make no distinctions between the various subgenres of modern fantasy. By and large, narrative perspective and the representation of consciousness belong to a level of narrative meaning-making that transcends the particularities of subgeneric differences in modern fantasy. As a genre, modern fantasy does not experiment with psychological realism, nor does it aim to reinvent consciousness as portrayed in prose fiction. Rather, it draws on the same pool of common novelistic techniques as other forms of popular literature. I find no

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<sup>3</sup> Eilers’s original definition of modern fantasy reads: “a post-Enlightenment prose fiction genre composed of narratives in which an extranatural power plays a fundamental role and that aim to create an illusion of reality” (318, see 336). I added the story world clause because I find the notion of internally coherent worlds tantamount to the nature of modern fantasy (see *Fantasy* 338–39).

reason to assume that any one subgenre of modern fantasy differs substantially from the rest in terms of rendering consciousness (save perhaps children's and young adult fantasy).

Finally, it should be noted that *fantasy* and *modern fantasy* are here used interchangeably. Both refer to fantasy literature produced after the turn of the twentieth century. Even though the roots of modern fantasy date at least as far back as the early 1800s (see Eilers 318; Wolfe, *Terms* 74), it is not until the twentieth century that fantastic otherworlds lose "the essential fragility of mere dreams" (Stableford, "Baum" 125), and achieve the kind of autonomy and coherence that my definition of modern fantasy entails.

### **1.3. Fritz Leiber and George R. R. Martin**

In choosing two representative fantasy novels that would allow me to chart, or at least suggest, the development from authorial narration to figural narration, I was primarily concerned with two criteria. First, the two novels needed to belong to the mainstream of modern American fantasy literature. In other words, they needed to be broadly representative of their times. A mainstream narrative is, after all, more likely to reflect prototypical patterns of narration than a generically marginal one. Second, the novels needed to be popular and important works by popular and important authors. Popularity translates into influence, which, in turn, amounts to the dissemination of style and technique through imitators. I was therefore looking for novels that were not only mainstream, but that were also important enough to have left their mark on the mainstream. Leiber's *The Swords of Lankhmar* and Martin's *A Game of Thrones* are two such novels, especially in the context of the series that spawned them: the Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser (F&GM) stories (1939–88), and *A Song of Ice and Fire* cycle (1996–),

respectively. It is a happy coincidence that both Leiber and Martin, in addition to being major authors, are also original writers who draw on a deep familiarity with the tradition of modern fantasy and with the art of writing in general.

Fritz Leiber (1910–92) is considered to be one of the most important and influential fantasy authors of the twentieth century (*Fantasy* 573; Stableford, “Leiber” 933, 935). He was particularly instrumental in the development of Sword and Sorcery<sup>4</sup> stories, a major subgenre of modern fantasy pioneered by Robert E. Howard in the 1920s and 1930s (*Fantasy* 915; Jakubowski 225; *Science* 1194–95; Stableford, “Baum” 130; Stableford, “Leiber” 933, 935). Next to Howard’s Conan the Cimmerian, and Michael Moorcock’s Elric of Melniboné, Leiber’s Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser are probably the best-known and best-loved characters in the Sword and Sorcery arena. The F&GM stories were written over a span of roughly 50 years, from the 1930s to the late 1980s, and cover nearly Leiber’s entire career as a professional writer (see Jakubowski 225; Stableford, “Leiber” 935).

Leiber’s greatest contribution to fantasy was his introduction of characters that are more human than superhuman, ordinary rather than extraordinary (Jakubowski 225; Stableford, “Leiber” 938). As Brian Stableford argues, “Leiber is . . . at his best when dealing with ordinary characters whose weaknesses are more obvious than their strengths. One of the great virtues of his heroic fantasy is that he succeeds where the vast majority of writers in the genre fail: he gives his heroes a true human dimension” (“Leiber” 938). Leiber’s own commentary on his two heroes rephrases the same argument in more earthy tones: “Fafhrd and the Mouser are rogues through and through,

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<sup>4</sup> *Sword and Sorcery* is usually synonymous with *Heroic Fantasy*. Some prefer the latter term as it is supposedly more formal and less campy or derogatory than the former (see *Fantasy* 464; Wolfe, “Terms” 52, 128; cf. *Science* 561–62).

though each has in him a lot of humanity and at least a diamond chip of the spirit of true adventure. They drink, they feast, they wench, they brawl, they steal, they gamble, and surely they hire out their swords to powers that are only a shade better, if that, than the villains” (“Note” 3). While much the same could be said of Conan, for example, Fafhrd and the Mouser, unlike their barbarian predecessor, are not supermen. Their distance from the classic fairy tale hero of many virtues and few flaws is therefore even more pronounced, as Leiber himself is quick to note with reference to Tolkien (ibid.). Fafhrd and the Mouser thus prefigure the more human hero that has since entered the mainstream of modern-day fantasy (e.g., through Martin).

In addition to fantasy in general, and Sword and Sorcery in particular, Leiber is also a respected author of science fiction and supernatural fiction (*Fantasy* 574; *Science* 706; Stableford, “Leiber” 933). He won six Hugo Awards, three Nebula Awards, three World Fantasy Awards, two British Fantasy Awards, an Ann Radcliffe Award, the 1975 Grand Master of Fantasy Award, the 1976 Life Achievement Lovecraft Award, the 1981 Grand Master Nebula Award, and the 1987 Bram Stoker Award for Life Achievement, as well as several others. The F&GM short story “Ill Met in Lankhmar” (1970) won both a Hugo (1971) and a Nebula (1970). While *The Swords of Lankhmar* has won no major awards, it is commonly considered a classic of modern fantasy (see *Fantasy* 574; *Science* 706; Stableford, “Leiber” 936; Tymn et al. 116). Leiber’s talent for fantastic fiction is considerable and original, and Stableford provides perhaps the best explanation as to why this is so:

Leiber’s stories are highly various, and they reveal him to be one of the most versatile fantasists. He is one of the few modern writers to be intimately familiar with the whole tradition of fantasy writing, and although he has never been influenced by other writers in the trivial sense of wanting to imitate their work . . . his familiarity with the motifs and methods of the best in supernatural fiction has helped to furnish his own imagination and has assisted him to enrich the tradition with his own contributions. (“Leiber” 935)

George R. R. Martin (1948–) has been a professional writer of fantasy and science fiction since the early 1970s (see *Fantasy* 625; *Science* 779). He is also well-known as the editor of several notable science fiction anthologies (see *Fantasy* 625–26; *Science* 779–80). His career has been a highly successful one, and he has won numerous awards, including four Hugo Awards, two Nebula Awards, a Bram Stoker Award, a World Fantasy Award, and eleven Locus Awards (see *ibid.*; *The Locus Index*). However, it was not until 1996 and the publication of *A Game of Thrones* in hardcover, the first novel in his seminal *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, and possibly his most important work to date, that Martin rose to bestselling fame. The novel won the 1997 Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel, and was nominated for a Hugo, a Nebula, and a World Fantasy Award. In addition, *Blood of the Dragon* (1996), a short story based on the Daenerys chapters from the novel, won the 1997 Hugo Award for Best Novella. The series, currently in its fourth installment and looking to include at least three more, has since become one of the most popular and critically acclaimed in modern fantasy.

Martin's importance to the genre, namely with *A Game of Thrones* and the series as a whole, is a difficult topic for three reasons. First, the huge popularity is a relatively recent phenomenon, and it is therefore too early to say what the effects on modern fantasy have been, or what they will be. Second, the series is not finished, which means that its reception and integration into the genre are still very much in progress. Third, partly due to the first two reasons, and partly because the field itself is lacking in recent studies, there is precious little scholarly commentary on Martin and virtually nothing on the series. For example, while both *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* and *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* have an entry on Martin, neither edition is recent enough to mention *A Song of Ice and Fire*. (Indeed, it will be interesting to see how future editions discuss the author and the series.) However, given its popular and critical success, there is little

doubt in my mind that the series will prove an important landmark in modern American fantasy.

Martin's most important contribution to the genre will most likely be the multilayered realism that permeates the series. His characters are round and subtly drawn individuals driven by complex and realistic ambitions and motives. Much like Leiber's characters, they are ordinary rather than extraordinary. There is neither absolute good nor absolute evil in Martin's story world, merely shifting shades of gray. Even the few heroics are usually fortuitous acts of desperation, or romantically colored misrepresentations, rather than the knightly acts of nobility that crowd traditional fantasy. Beyond the characterization, there is a new kind of grittiness to the story world, almost a kind of naturalism, that results in a pronouncedly unromantic and unforgiving otherworld ("a fantasy realm too vile for hobbits" as Dinitia Smith aptly puts it). This realism is further accentuated by Martin's famously sparse and subtle use of magic and other fantastic elements. The fantastic is often either naturalized as normal, in which case it passes unmarked through a character's consciousness, or backgrounded as an ambiguous and mysterious force hovering on the margins of consciousness and action. For a fantasy realm, Martin's story world is a strikingly real place.

While this sort of realism, realistic characterization in particular, is not altogether new to the genre, it is rarely found in such a multilayered combination and in such powerful form as in Martin. If Leiber was an early template for a new kind of realism in modern fantasy literature, then Martin is surely one of its fullest and finest current instantiations.



#### 1.4. The Inward Turn

The shift in narrative technique, the *inward turn* to borrow a popular coinage, can be described as a movement from one generic narrative situation to another. What I have thus far called *authorial narration* and *figural narration* correspond to the *authorial narrative situation* and the *figural narrative situation* as defined by F. K. Stanzel. In an authorial narrative situation, the story is told by an overt heterodiegetic narrator whose storytelling powers often extend to omniscience and omnipresence, and who is known for his intrusions, commentaries, philosophical reflections, reader addresses, and other similar vocal activities (Stanzel 5, 144; Jahn N1.15., N3.3.5.; Rimmon-Kenan 96). It is precisely the external and privileged perspective of such a personalized narrator that organizes representation in authorial narration (Stanzel 5, 47–48, 55).

Figural narration, by comparison, presents the story from the limited perspective of a third person character (“figure”), creating the illusion that the story world is apprehended directly through that character’s consciousness (Stanzel 5, 48, 144). The external perspective of an authorial narrator is thus replaced by the story-internal perspective of an experiencing consciousness, a “reflector” (Stanzel 5). Figural narration typically hides a highly covert and unobtrusive narrator. Unlike the authorial narrator, he does not indulge in commentaries, instructions, or any other overt activities that might draw attention to his presence as a narrating agency. By backgrounding the act of narration and foregrounding the reflector character’s consciousness, the narrator of a figural narrative situation effectively effaces himself from view (see Jahn N1.18.; Stanzel 47).

In practice, modern heterodiegetic narratives do not, of course, fall neatly into these two categories. As Stanzel himself notes, the narrative situations “must be understood first and foremost as rough descriptions of basic possibilities” (4). They

describe “ideal types” only (Stanzel 8). Most heterodiegetic narratives fall somewhere between the two poles of authorial and figural narration (see Stanzel 141–42, 168–69). That is, most authorial narratives contain elements of figural narration, and most figural narratives contain elements of authorial narration. There are even ambiguous narratives that cannot be comfortably assigned to either category (Stanzel 145, 148). It follows that authorial narrators can be covert and impersonalized, and that the narrators of figural narratives can sometimes display signs of overtness and an authorial stance. Furthermore, “the narrative situation of the individual work is not a static condition but a dynamic process of constant modulation or oscillation” (Stanzel 185; see Jahn N1.19., N3.3.12.; Stanzel 141–42). It is often impossible to determine whether a passage is to be interpreted as authorial or figural (Stanzel 197). What finally decides the overall narrative situation of a given work is its preference for either type of narration: authorial narratives favor authorial narration, figural narratives favor figural narration.

The so-called inward turn of the novel<sup>5</sup>, the first full exploration of figural techniques and sustained figural narration, is commonly agreed to have taken place during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century (see Cohn 8–9; Fludernik, *Narratology* 169–72; Jahn N1.18., N8.8.; Stanzel 62, 185–86). This development is usually associated with authors such as Gustave Flaubert, Henry James, Franz Kafka, Katherine Mansfield, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, and William Faulkner, to name a few (Jahn N1.18., N8.8.; see Cohn 26, 113–15; Stanzel 133, 136). Modernism and the Modernist novel are typically considered the culmination point in the inward turn (see Cohn 8; Fludernik, *Narratology* 172). Furthermore, the development of figural narration is often linked with the

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<sup>5</sup> The term originates from Erich Kahler’s *Die Verinnerung des Erzählens* (1957–58), translated posthumously as *The Inward Turn of Narrative* (1973) (see Cohn 8; Onega and Landa 22).

development of free indirect discourse<sup>6</sup>, which, for many scholars, represents the quintessential technique for representing figural consciousness (see Cohn 111, 112–15, 139; Fludernik, *Narratology* 153–58; cf. Palmer 30–31).

Figural narrative techniques far precede the inward turn, of course. While true reflectoral narratives had to wait for the likes of Joyce and Woolf, many earlier authorial narratives already display figural techniques as part of their formal repertoire. The writer who is usually credited with introducing figural narration (and thus free indirect discourse) into the English novel is Jane Austen (1775–1817) (see Cohn 113). Stanzel even goes so far as to classify *Emma* (1815) as a hybrid form suspended between the authorial and the figural (xvi; see 148). Monika Fludernik locates the origins of figural narration and the use of free indirect discourse for the representation of consciousness even earlier, in Aphra Behn (1640–89) (*Narratology* 130–31, 153–58, 169–72). In addition to Behn and Austen, Fludernik also takes up other important early contributors such as Horace Walpole (1717–97), Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823), and the Gothic novel tradition in general (see *Narratology* 48, 170–72).

Irene de Jong goes yet further, arguing that substantial figural narration can be found as far back as Homer (see de Jong). Drawing her examples from Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Apollonius Rhodius, she claims that each author already displays clear tendencies toward representing the story world through the subjective perspective of one or more characters rather than the omniscient perspective of an authorial narrator as has usually been assumed. While the argument is interesting and the analysis thoughtful, de Jong's claim is suspect for several reasons: what she interprets as figural narration could as easily – and perhaps more readily – be read as

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<sup>6</sup> For a fuller discussion on free indirect discourse and related techniques, see section 3.1. below.

authorial glimpses inside the minds of characters; she makes no distinction between representation through a single figural perspective and the collective or simultaneous representation through multiple perspectives (which, by definition, is an authorial maneuver); she makes no mention of free indirect discourse; and she never addresses the possible linguistic discrepancies between the English prose translations (which she uses) and the Ancient Greek originals. Nevertheless, her argument does suggest that perhaps figural narration, in some rudimentary form, can be found even further back than either Austen or Behn.

### **1.5. Note on Terminology**

In this thesis, the word *authorial* is reserved exclusively for fictional narrators and narrating in heterodiegetic contexts. It is a qualitative modifier meant to evoke a type of narrator or narratorial activity. It has nothing to do with real-life authors. (Indeed, this thesis has precious little to say about them in the first place.) I am aware that this may strike a wrong chord with some Anglo-American narratologists, but my main concern is to remain consistent with my research sources. Cohn, Fludernik, Jahn, and Stanzel all employ the word *authorial* in the manner I have just described. (Rimmon-Kenan does not discuss narrative situations as such, and therefore refers to authorial narrators and related phenomena only sporadically.)

Furthermore, while both *narratorial* and *omniscient*, for example, are good alternatives for *authorial*, they are ultimately unsatisfactory. *Narratorial* is simply too broad, since it can refer to any narrator-related phenomenon, authorial or otherwise. By comparison, *omniscient* carries too narrow a connotation: there is more to narrators and narrating than knowledge. In addition, and more to the point, authorial narrators need

not be consistently omniscient (see section 1.4. above; Stanzel 126). For my purposes in this thesis, then, *authorial* remains the best choice.

## 2. FROM AUTHORIAL TO FIGURAL PERCEPTION

### 2.1. Preliminaries: Consciousness and Focalization

Following Monika Fludernik, I consider fictional narratives to be primarily about consciousness and the mediation of experience<sup>7</sup> through consciousness (*Narratology* 12–13, 49–50). The mediating consciousness may be that of a narrator, a reflector character, or some agency in between. However, the object of mediation is always the same: anthropomorphic experience inside a story world. According to this approach, then, the representation of consciousness is not merely *a* feature of narration but *the* feature. Thus, when I discuss the representation of consciousness, I refer to the entire narrative framework: everything that contributes to how a story world is apprehended, and how experience in it is mediated. The narrator's relation to the story world and to focalization are as relevant here as how closely the narrator's language approximates the language of characters, or how much psychonarration there is.

Accordingly, my analysis is divided into two parts: consciousness in narration and consciousness in language. The former focuses on such overarching aspects of narration as perspective and mode (i.e., how the story world is perceived and by whom). In the latter, I focus on language, and discuss the evocation of consciousness and voice from a more linguistically oriented point of view. This division is, of course, somewhat arbitrary. Actual narratives are entities that come neatly apart only in theoretical abstractions, and even then with difficulty. It is not as though one can discuss narration

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<sup>7</sup> Experience here refers to the “the quasi-mimetic evocation of ‘real-life experience’”, what Fludernik calls “experientiality” (*Narratology* 12). In other words, experience encompasses everything that a character goes through in the course of a narrative, and this experience is interpreted by readers as analogous to real human experience, as relating to “human existence and human concerns” (Fludernik, *Narratology* 13).

without discussing the language from which it is construed in the first place. A certain amount of overlap is thus inevitable. Nonetheless, the distinction is a convenient abstraction and should make the analysis easier to follow.

Before going into the analysis, let me introduce what is perhaps the most useful tool for distinguishing between authorial narration and figural narration: focalization. Focalization has received its fair share of scholarly attention, of course: Gérard Genette, Mieke Bal, Seymour Chatman, Manfred Jahn, Susan Lanser, Ansgar Nünning, Patrick O'Neill, Gerald Prince, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, and others have discussed it (see Jahn N3.2.3.; Phelan 53). But for the purposes of this thesis I shall draw mainly on Jahn and Rimmon-Kenan, who both provide an excellent analysis of focalization. In addition, Rimmon-Kenan's account is an encompassing synthesis of various earlier theories which makes it doubly useful.

Every narrative involves two principal agents: one whose perception orients the narration, and another who verbalizes this perception (Jahn N3.2.2.; Rimmon-Kenan 72, 75). The former is called the focalizer while the latter is the narrator. Focalization is thus "a means of selecting and restricting narrative information, of seeing events and states of affairs from somebody's point of view" (Jahn N3.2.2.). Note that point of view needs to be understood broadly here. In addition to sensory perception, it also covers the focalizer's "cognitive, emotive and ideological orientation" (Rimmon-Kenan 72; see Jahn N3.2.2.). In other words, focalization is about perception in a very broad sense.

Narration and focalization may or may not coincide in the same agent (Rimmon-Kenan 73). Further, focalization "can be either external or internal to the story. External focalization is felt to be close to the narrating agent [whereas] the locus of internal focalization is inside the represented events" (Rimmon-Kenan 75–76). Roughly speaking, in external focalization the focalizer is the narrator, and in internal

focalization s/he is a character in the story (i.e., a reflector). External focalization therefore corresponds to authorial narration, and internal focalization to figural narration (see Jahn N1.18., N3.3.7.; Rimmon-Kenan 78–82; Stanzel 141). Lastly, focalization can render the object of focalization (“the focalized”) either from within or from without (Rimmon-Kenan 77).

Rimmon-Kenan distinguishes between three facets of focalization: perceptual, psychological, and ideological (see 78–84). The perceptual facet, or sensory orientation, is further divided into spatial and temporal focalization, and the psychological facet into cognitive and emotive focalization. The following analysis is organized roughly around the spatial, temporal, and cognitive aspects of focalization. These three are more than sufficient for exploring the narrative patterns at work in Leiber and Martin, since both narratives use focalization in a relatively consistent manner across the board, and I have therefore opted to exclude emotion and ideology from the analysis. In principal, any three would suffice.

## **2.2. Story Space and Story Time**

### **2.2.1. Space**

Panoramic focalization, that is, external focalization that presents a comprehensive and unobstructed view of events and places in story space, is one of the staples of authorial narration (see Rimmon-Kenan 78). It is also the most pronounced form of external focalization in terms of spatial perception. As befits an authorial narrator, the narrator in Leiber’s *The Swords of Lankhmar* makes ample use of this technique. He often begins chapters and subsections with panoramic views such as this one:

The rats everywhere launched their grand assault on Lankhmar Above a half hour before midnight, striking chiefly by way of golden ratholes. There were a few premature sorties, as on Silver Street, and elsewhere a few delays, as at ratholes discovered and blocked by



humans at the last moment, but on the whole the attack was simultaneous. (Leiber, *Swords* 199)

Here the perspective is clearly that of an omniscient narrator. No individual character in the story could possibly see what all the rats were doing in their countless ratholes, or how the assault was progressing in different locations at the same time. Only an authorial narrator focalizing from above, so to speak, can command such a privileged view of story space. The distance to individual characters is at its maximum here.

While there are many panoramic passages in Leiber, some extending over entire scenes and subsections (e.g., the above quotation opens one of several panoramically narrated interludes that survey the rat invasion in Lankhmar), the story is typically presented from a perspective more closely attached to the characters or the center of action. The following passage provides a typical example of a visual perspective that is external without being panoramic:

Ship's master Slinoor looked back with hooded appraising eyes at the small lithe gray-clad man and his tall, more gaudily accoutered barbarian comrade. The master of *Squid* was a sleek black-robed man of middle years. He stood beside the two stocky black-tunicked bare-legged sailors who held steady the great high-arching tiller that guided *Squid*. (Leiber, *Swords* 13)

Even though it is Slinoor who is looking here, the scene is clearly not focalized through his perspective, since he too is an object of observation (“hooded appraising eyes”, “a sleek black-robed man of middle years”). Nor does the perspective belong to “the small lithe gray-clad man” or “his tall, more gaudily accoutered barbarian comrade” as they are focalized from the outside as well. Apart from these three characters, there is no one present at the scene who could conceivably function as the focalizer, which leaves only the narrator as external focalizer. (There is, however, a hint of figural perspective in the first sentence: “looked back” could suggest a brief or partial adoption of Slinoor’s spatial perspective.)

This external perspective is even more pronounced when the focalization switches spatially between multiple characters. In such cases of consecutive focalization, it is the narrator's evident privilege of moving freely within story space that foregrounds the authorial, unrestricted nature of the narration. For example, consider the spatial shifts in the following passage which has Fafhrd riding down a hill, and Kreeshkra, Fafhrd's ghoulish lover, situated atop the hill:

Kreeshkra sprang up, snatched the bow and arrow, ran to the rim of the grassy saucer and drew a bead on Fafhrd's back, held it for three heartbeats, then turned abruptly and winged the arrow at the thorn tree. It lodged quivering in the center of the gray trunk.

Fafhrd glanced quickly around at the *snap, whir, tchunk!* A skeleton arm was waving him goodbye and continued to do so until he reached the road at the foot of the slope, where he urged the mare into a long-striding lope.

On the hilltop Kreeshkra stood in thought for two breaths. Then from her belt she detached something invisible, which she dropped in the center of the dying campfire.

There was a sputtering and a shower of sparks, when a bright blue flame shot straight up a dozen yards and burnt for as many heartbeats before it died. Kreeshkra's bones looked like blued iron, her glinting glassy flesh like scraps of tropic night-sky, but there was none to see this beauty.

Fafhrd watched the needlelike flare over shoulder as he sped rockingly along and he frowned into the wind. (Leiber, *Swords* 121)

The narrator begins by focalizing on Kreeshkra as she snatches the bow and shoots the arrow ("drew a bead on Fafhrd's back" aligns the narrative perspective spatially with Kreeshkra's position). As the arrow hits the tree trunk, focalization shifts briefly to Fafhrd. Kreeshkra is now seen from Fafhrd's perspective: "A skeleton arm was waving him goodbye" (note the spatial distance suggested by "skeleton arm"). A second shift occurs with "On the hilltop" which returns the narrative to Kreeshkra. Finally, there is another shift to Fafhrd who is now watching "the needlelike flare over shoulder" (note the even greater spatial distance suggested by "the *needlelike* flare").

Even though the two Fafhrd paragraphs in the above passage can be interpreted as internally focalized through Fafhrd's perspective, the framework for the whole passage is patently authorial. The authorial narration is most pronounced when the narrator describes Kreeshkra's macabre beauty through external focalization, and then proceeds

to note how there is no one present to see this beauty: “Kreeshkra’s bones looked like blued iron, her glinting glassy flesh like scraps of tropic night-sky, but there was none to see this beauty” (ibid.). The implied paradox in the concluding statement can only be resolved by assigning the sentence to an authorial narrator situated outside the story world.<sup>8</sup> Coupled with the overall pattern of consecutive focalization and the external focalization on Kreeshkra, this statement establishes the whole passage as authorially narrated. Indeed, the authorial framework might even prompt one to read the Fafhrd paragraphs as externally focalized glimpses into Fafhrd’s perspective (Rimmon-Kenan’s “external focalization from within” (77)) rather than as instances of actual internal focalization by Fafhrd himself.

Despite the dominance of external focalization, internal focalization is by no means uncommon in Leiber. Brief approximations of figural perception often extend to sustained passages of perspectivized narration, marking a shift from external to internal focalization. For instance, note how the space around the Mouser is here perceived strictly in terms of what he can see and hear:

Splashings began, first two and then three, then what sounded like a half dozen together, mixed with screams. The Mouser twisted his head around and from the corner of his eye saw the last two of *Squid’s* sailors leap over the side. Straining a little further around yet, he saw Slinoor clutch to his chest two rats that worried him and follow the sailors . . . When the Mouser turned his head aft again, Hisvet was standing before him. (Leiber, *Swords* 62–63)

The narration clearly follows the Mouser’s path of perception, from what he can hear taking place outside his field of vision (“what sounded like”) to what he can see by turning his head. The internal focalization is further strengthened by the surrounding narrative which adheres very closely to the Mouser’s perspective (see Leiber, *Swords* 59–65).

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<sup>8</sup> For another example of this classic paradox of omniscience, see the Leiber quote on page 1 above.

An even more restricted sensory perspective prevails in the morning-after scene involving Fafhrd and what he believes to be his previous night's conquest (or possibly conquests). Fafhrd is lying in bed with his eyes shut and his hands happily groping for wine and women. Perception of space is limited solely to what he can feel, hear and smell (and imagine):

To his left, within easy arm-reach on a stout night table would be a large pewter flagon of light wine. Even now he could sense, he thought, its coolth. Good.

To his right, within even easier reach, Hrenlet. He could feel her radiant warmth and hear her snoring – very loudly, in fact.

....

Fafhrd permitted himself a dry-throated, raspy yawn. Was ever man so fortunate? At his left hand, wine. At his right a beauteous girl, or more likely two, since there was a sweet strong farm-smell coming to him under the sheets; and what is juicier than a farmer's (or cattleman's) redhead daughter? While under his pillows— He twisted his head and neck luxuriously; he couldn't quite feel the tight-bulging bag of golden coins – the pillows were many and thick – but he could imagine it.

....

Then with his right hand he stroked the girl – Hrenlet, or her cousin? – from shoulder to haunch.

She was covered with short bristly fur and, at his amorous touch, she moaned. (Leiber, *Swords* 75–76)

The girl under the sheets turns out to be a calf, planted there by the real Hrenlet in exchange for Fafhrd's gold and manly pride. The supposed conqueror turns out to be the conquered. The reason for the carefully plotted internal focalization is obvious: it simply makes for better comedy to gradually build up the scene inside the self-absorbed hero's consciousness rather than give the game away through an external perspective.

In addition to shifts between external and internal focalization, Leiber's narrative sometimes adopts a character's spatial perspective only partially. The resulting view of story space is left suspended between external and internal focalization, belonging neither to a character nor to the narrator as external focalizer, yet still retaining a sense of story-internal subjectivity. Consider, for example, the observer in this passage:

Hisvet and Frix were in the cabin with the door shut. The Demoiselle had wanted to watch the duel through the open door or even from the afterdeck, but Lukeen had protested that this would make it easier for her to work an evil spell on him, and the judges had ruled for Lukeen. However the grille was open and now and again the sun's rays twinkled on a peering eye or silvered fingernail. (Leiber, *Swords* 40–41)

Who sees the sun's rays twinkling on a peering eye or a silvered fingernail? Hisvet and Frix are clearly out of the question, since they are the ones inside the cabin. Lukeen is also an unlikely choice because the surrounding narrative is in no way anchored to his perspective. Also, if Lukeen were the observer, one would expect the last sentence to make some reference to him (e.g., "now and again Lukeen could see the sun's rays twinkle on a peering eye"). The only agent left is the narrator.

However, the visually restricted quality of the focalization ("a peering eye or silvered fingernail" (*ibid.*)) argues against external focalization, suggesting instead internal focalization by someone inside the story world. But since there is no specific someone available who could function as the focalizer, the perspective must belong to anyone and everyone. In other words, it can be argued that the focalizer position is one that any character on deck could potentially possess, and probably does possess at some point during the duel, but that no character inhabits exclusively. Should one nevertheless want to claim this collective perspective for the narrator, it could be conceptualized as an anonymous character position that the narrator temporarily projects on the scene and adopts.<sup>9</sup> The reading effect, however, remains the same: an ambiguous story-internal perspective suspended between character and narrator.

Leiber's narrator clearly displays a wide variety of approaches for rendering the story world spatially: panoramic views alternate with closer views of events and places, external focalization with internal focalization on space, and so forth. Yet despite the overall authorial structure, the narrative often veers toward figurally narrated perception.

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<sup>9</sup> This is precisely how Stanzel conceives the phenomenon, as the "reflectorization" of an authorial narrator (170). That is, "reflectorization means the assumption by the teller-character [an authorial narrator] of particular attributes of a reflector-character" (*ibid.*; see Stanzel 168–84). For more on reflectorization, see page 50 below.

By comparison, Martin's narrator in *A Game of Thrones* filters practically everything through reflector characters. Each chapter in the novel presents the story from the limited perspective of a single character (save for the prologue, all chapters are actually named after the corresponding center-of-consciousness character). As a rule, the narrator perceives only what the reflector characters perceive.

Figural perception of space is highly pronounced when the object of perception is something the reflector character cannot properly perceive, that is, when the already limited perspective of the reflector is further limited by spatial circumstances. A case in point in Martin is the scene where Catelyn is keeping watch over her comatose son, Bran, in his sickroom, while arguing with her eldest son, Robb. Their quarrel is interrupted when a fire suddenly breaks out in the library tower across the castle courtyard. Note the way the fire is focalized through Catelyn's perspective:

*Fire*, she thought, and then, *Bran!* "Help me," she said urgently, sitting up. "Help me with Bran."

Robb did not seem to hear her. "The library tower's on fire," he said.

Catelyn could see the flickering reddish light through the open window now. She sagged with relief. Bran was safe. The library was across the bailey, there was no way the fire would reach them here. "Thank the gods," she whispered.

Robb looked at her as if she'd gone mad. "Mother, stay here. I'll come back as soon as the fire's out." He ran then. She heard him shout to the guards outside the room, heard them descending together in a wild rush, taking the stairs two and three at a time.

Outside, there were shouts of "Fire!" in the yard, screams, running footsteps, the whinny of frightened horses, and the frantic barking of the castle dogs. (Martin 131–32)

The world outside Bran's sickroom is reduced to a cacophony of sounds, and to what Catelyn can glimpse through the open window. For Catelyn, and hence for the narrator, the fire exists mainly in the shouts, screams, and animal sounds coming from the yard outside, and briefly as a "flickering reddish light" seen through the window. In other words, the narrative renders the fire as Catelyn perceives it from her confined position inside the sickroom: vaguely and mainly indirectly.

It is also significant that Catelyn loses interest in the fire the moment she realizes that Bran is not in danger (“She sagged with relief. Bran was safe” (Martin 131)). She focalizes the fire as a passive recipient of irrelevant sensory information rather than an active observer of a potential disaster. The motivation for this is clear: the fire does not concern her since it seems to pose no threat to her child. The sketchy focalization on the fire therefore results not only from a spatially confined position but also from a psychologically indifferent one. Indeed, Catelyn’s indifference is evident when she closes the window and shuts out the world:

Catelyn said a silent prayer of thanks to the seven faces of god as she went to the window. Across the bailey, long tongues of flame shot from the windows of the library. She watched the smoke rise into the sky and thought sadly of all the books the Starks had gathered over the centuries. Then she closed the shutters. (Martin 132)

Catelyn’s gratitude to the gods and sadness over the lost books seem sorely out of place during an incident as dangerous as the fire. Her final act of closing the window shutters underscores her misplaced priorities quite vividly. However, from the perspective of a mother who is mad with grief over her son’s condition, Catelyn’s actions and disposition make sense.

A particularly interesting rendering of story space through a reflector character occurs when Bran wakes up from his coma. The coma ends in a dream in which Bran is falling through darkness, with the world spread out below him. A talking crow is trying to teach him how to fly. He learns to fly just as he is about to hit the ground, but then the crow attacks him, and the dream is dispelled:

The crow opened its beak and cawed at him, a shrill scream of fear, and the grey mists shuddered and swirled around him and ripped away like a veil, and he saw that the crow was really a woman, a serving woman with long black hair, and he knew her from somewhere, from Winterfell, yes, that was it, he remembered her now, and then he realized that he was in Winterfell, in a bed high in some chilly tower room, and the black-haired woman dropped a basin of water to shatter on the floor and ran down the steps, shouting, “He’s awake, he’s awake, he’s awake.” (Martin 164)

The shift from the dream world to the real world is entirely unmarked. Bran's consciousness simply flows from one world to the other, registering it all as though it were a single reality. The reader knows that Bran is awake, and that he is looking with his real eyes rather than his mind's eye when the crow turns into the serving woman ("the crow was really a woman, a serving woman"). The narrative bridges Bran's internal, imagined space and the external, physical space from within, as it were, through Bran's perceiving consciousness, and it does this seamlessly. The accumulation of delayed realizations further accentuates and develops this subjectivity ("a serving woman . . . he knew her from somewhere . . . he remembered her now . . . he realized that he was in Winterfell, in a bed high in some chilly tower room"). Note also how the narrative empathically echoes Bran's inner voice in "yes, that was it".

External focalization on space, by comparison, is virtually nonexistent in Martin. I have found only one instance where Martin's otherwise consistent internal focalization on space is clearly violated by external focalization: Bran's fall from the broken castle tower. In the following passage, the first two paragraphs are focalized by Bran, but consider the focalization in the last paragraph which follows the fall:

The man looked over at the woman. "The things I do for love," he said with loathing. He gave Bran a shove.

Screaming, Bran went backward out the window into empty air. There was nothing to grab on to. The courtyard rushed up to meet him.

Somewhere off in the distance, a wolf was howling. Crows circled the broken tower, waiting for corn. (Martin 85)

Who focalizes on the howling and the crows? Clearly it has to be the narrator as the reflector character for the chapter has just hit the courtyard and probably perished. Yet there is no discernible change in the narrative language. In other words, the shift from internal to external focalization does not affect the narrator's covertness. There is even a



trace of figural perspectivism in the indistinct “somewhere off in the distance”. If not for the fall, the focalizer could actually be Bran.

The reason for this violation is obvious: the last paragraph ends the dramatic turn of events on a properly somber yet ominous note. The distant howling and the circling crows paint a menacing image: Is Bran dead? Moreover, the image is an appropriately personal one for Bran, since it is his wolf that is howling in the distance, and the crows are waiting for the corn that he sometimes brings them when he climbs the broken tower. The penultimate paragraph would have been too abrupt a passage emotionally to end the chapter with. Martin, then, is not above prioritizing the needs of dramatic storytelling over those of formal consistency.

While the internally focalized passages from Martin are basically analogous to those from Leiber, it bears repeating that in Martin internal focalization on space is the rule rather than the exception. In Martin, story space is almost always focalized through a reflector character’s consciousness, whereas in Leiber spatial focalization tends to originate in the narrator’s external perspective, even though there are definite shifts toward and into internal focalization.

### **2.2.2. Time**

According to Rimmon-Kenan, external focalization is “panchronic” in terms of story time, that is, “an external focalizer has at his disposal all the temporal dimensions of the story (past, present and future)” (79–80). By comparison, “internal focalization is synchronous with the information regulated by the focalizer” (Rimmon-Kenan 79). In other words, internal focalization is restricted to the focalizer’s present (Rimmon-Kenan 80). An authorial narrator, then, has free reign over story time, whereas the narrator in a figural narrative situation is limited to the reflector character’s temporal coordinates.

Considering how diversely Leiber's narrator treats story space, it is somewhat surprising how conservative he is with story time. By and large, the narrative adheres to the present of the characters, even if it sometimes only skims it. Authorial shifts in story time are few and far between, and usually implied rather than actual. Consider, for example, the temporal perspective in this passage: "Thereafter there swiftly grew in Lankhmar a new legend of the Gray Mouser and Fafhrd: how as rat-small midget and bell-tower giant they had saved Lankhmar from the rats" (Leiber, *Swords* 229). Given that the narrative returns to present time in the next paragraph, this passage can only be an authorial flashforward. However, since the future is not actually perceived in any sensory fashion, the passage is perhaps more appropriately conceived as knowledge of the future. Indeed, external focalization on past and future events in Leiber typically comes down to what the narrator knows rather than what he directly perceives.

But what the narrative lacks in temporal shifts, it more than makes up for in temporal summaries. In Leiber, scenic focalization on action, whether external or internal, is often interspersed with or replaced by condensations and compressions of action: the narration remains synchronous with respect to the now of story time, but the pace of narration picks up considerably.<sup>10</sup> The use of such narrative devices necessarily implies the presence of an authorial narrator manipulating story time (see Jahn N5.3.1.; Rimmon-Kenan 99). A case in point is the scene where Fafhrd and the Mouser ("the two adventurers") are conversing with Karl Treuherz, a traveler from another world, while the latter's pet dragon ("Scylla's sated daughter") is circling about:

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<sup>10</sup> Scene or scenic presentation is a narrative mode which presents an event in detail, foregrounding narrative information while backgrounding the narrator, and where story time is conventionally conceived as flowing in real time, that is, in approximate congruence with the narration (Jahn N5.3.1.; Rimmon-Kenan 54). By comparison, summary is a narrative mode where "the pace is accelerated through a textual 'condensation' or 'compression' of a given story-period into a relatively short statement of its main features" (Rimmon-Kenan 53; see Jahn N5.3.1.).

All the rest of that night the two adventurers conversed with Karl Treuherz, telling each other fabulous things about each other's worlds, while Scylla's sated daughter slowly circled *Squid*, first one head sleeping and then the other. Talking was slow and uncertain work, even with the aid of the little *Lankhmarese-German German-Lankhmarese Dictionary for Space-Time and Inter-Cosmic Travelers*, and neither party really believed a great deal of the other's tales, yet pretended to for friendship's sake. (Leiber, *Swords* 73)

Temporal condensation is here signaled explicitly by the opening clause ("All the rest of that night the two adventurers conversed with Karl Treuherz"). The main action, the conversation, is abridged to its bare essentials. All the reader really learns is that the two parties tell each other amazing stories, that this is slow going because of the language barrier, and that neither party really believes the other's stories, even though they pretend to out of courtesy. The specifics of the tales and the telling are omitted, and for a good reason: the specifics are not important to the story. It is the privilege of the authorial narrator to omit the details and summarize the action through external focalization. The authorial cast of the passage is further apparent in the panoramic view of the scene, and in the collective focalization on multiple minds ("neither party really believed . . . yet pretended to").<sup>11</sup>

Temporal summaries are relatively common in Leiber, and typically serve to speed up the story and bridge together more important scenes that are rendered in greater scenic detail and temporal congruence. They are also used, although less often, for flashback exposition, where the narrator looks back in time, and allows the narrative to catch up with the story by briefly recounting a character's steps since his or her last appearance (e.g., Fafhrd's long ride (Leiber, *Swords* 91–92)). In addition to such more clearly authorial instances, flashback exposition is occasionally displaced inside the mind of a character: the past is focalized through a character's memory, and the

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<sup>11</sup> For a contrasting reading between external and internal temporal focalization, compare the temporal acceleration in this passage with the pronounced temporal congruence in the passage where Fafhrd is snug abed with the furry calf (see page 26 above).

exposition is conveniently camouflaged as an act of remembering (e.g., the Mouser's trek through the Marsh (Leiber, *Swords* 109)). However, summarizing the past from within a character's consciousness is more about the character's knowledge of the past than about the narrator's manipulation of story time, and therefore does not really qualify as a temporal shift in the formal sense. After all, the act of remembering, although oriented toward the past, takes place in the present of the focalizing or focalized character.

In Martin's *A Game of Thrones*, as one might expect, the narration is mostly synchronous with the present of the reflector characters. Since internal focalization and figural perspectivism are the rule, external focalization on story time is exceedingly rare: authorial shifts in time and temporal summaries are for the most part absent. All the preceding passages from Martin already demonstrate the close temporal synchrony and congruence that characterizes the narrative. This adherence to the reflector's present, although never thematic in Martin, is occasionally highly pronounced:

Afterward Maester Luwin arrived to dress her wounds. The cuts in her fingers went deep, almost to the bone, and her scalp was raw and bleeding where he'd pulled out a handful of hair. The maester told her the pain was just starting now, and gave her milk of the poppy to help her sleep.

Finally she closed her eyes.

When she opened them again, they told her that she had slept four days. Catelyn nodded and sat up in bed. (Martin 133–34)

Like Catelyn's consciousness, the narrative simply skips the four days. For Catelyn, and therefore for the narrator, time flows directly from the moment of falling asleep ("she closed her eyes") to the moment of waking up ("she opened them again"). The narrative completely adheres to Catelyn's subjective perception of time. (It even makes sense that she does not dream or remember having dreamt as her sleep is one of utter exhaustion.)

A similar instance of subjective temporal perception finds another reflector character, Tyrion Lannister, losing track of a few seconds when a direwolf attacks him in the woods:

He never saw the wolf, where it was or how it came at him. One moment he was walking toward Snow and the next he was flat on his back on the hard rocky ground, the book spinning away from him as he fell, the breath going out of him at the sudden impact, his mouth full of dirt and blood and rotting leaves. As he tried to get up, his back spasmed painfully. He must have wrenched it in the fall. (Martin 125)

The attack itself is never narrated. Even the ensuing fall is focalized only partially, with the actual falling action omitted. The suddenness and shock of the attack cause Tyrion's mind to miss a step. Because the narration is internally focalized, the narrative renders only his fragmentary perception of the event: him walking and then suddenly hitting the ground. The middle is missing precisely because the reflector character's consciousness fails to register it.

But notice how the event is effectively depicted twice: once in the incipit sentence "He never saw the wolf, where it was or how it came at him" (ibid.) that prefigures the attack, and again in the actual scenic rendering of the event in the second sentence. The incipit is almost like a quick flashforward. That is, the narrative seems to skip ahead a few seconds, and then quickly double back for another try. Although this technically violates internal focalization and temporal synchrony with the focalizer's present, the overall reading effect, to my mind, is nevertheless one of a continuous present as perceived by Tyrion. The present participles in particular anchor the focalization to a tangible here and now ("the book *spinning* away . . . the breath *going* out of him" (ibid.)). In reading the passage, the incipit functions as a dramatic beat that accentuates the suddenness of the moment, making the scene itself that much more powerful. In effect, then, there is no violation.

The temporal synchrony in Martin also affects the overall narrative structure: not only do the individual chapters adhere to the present of their reflector character, but they also share a single timeline. When story time passes for one reflector character in one chapter, it also passes equally for all the other reflector characters (and for the story world as a whole). The narrative never picks up a reflector character's story thread from where (or rather, when) it was left off in a previous chapter. This sort of overarching synchrony with a single, shared present accentuates the narrative's immersion in the story world as experienced through the reflector characters.

Of course, the lost time is often surveyed retrospectively in a reflector character's consciousness. Such subjective flashbacks ("mnemonic flashbacks" in Cohn's terminology (37)) are a convenient means of providing exposition after the fact, especially in figural narration where the narrator cannot step in to explain, and Martin's narrative certainly makes voracious use of them. Indeed, the flashbacks are sometimes sustained for so long, and narrated with such close spatial and temporal approximation to the past event that an actual shift in story time seems to occur (e.g., Daenerys's vivid recollection of a late night supper and a nightmare that followed (Martin 99–101); Tyrion recalls his capture by Catelyn (Martin 325–28); Catelyn's recollection of a duel, sparked by watching another duel in present time (Martin 439–40)). However, these movements in story time are always embedded in internal focalization, and thus to the focalizer's present. The fact that they conveniently provide the reader with useful information may draw attention to the narrating authority lurking behind the reflector character, but they are nevertheless always recuperable as reflection by a figural consciousness situated in the now of story time (see Cohn 37–38, 128; Rimmon-Kenan 51).

Even though internal focalization and temporal synchrony are the rule in Martin, there are moments when the narrator seems to switch briefly into external focalization on story time. One of the most conspicuous violations comes at the end of one of Jon's chapters. Jon has just given his sister, Arya, a needle-shaped short sword as a parting gift, and is about to leave on his long journey north:

"Like Ice," she said. She looked at the blade in her hand. "Does this have a name? Oh, tell me."

"Can't you guess?" Jon teased. "Your very favorite thing."

Arya seemed puzzled at first. Then it came to her. She was that quick. They said it together:

"*Needle!*"

The memory of her laughter warmed him on the long ride north. (Martin 98)

Until the last paragraph, the narrative adheres closely to Jon's focalization in present time. Not counting the paragraph, the chapter covers perhaps an hour of Jon's life. By comparison, the single sentence that makes up the last paragraph seems to span the entire ride north, a journey lasting several weeks. It is difficult to say whether the sentence constitutes a flashforward or a covert temporal summary of the journey. (It turns out, in fact, to be a flashforward as the journey is later focalized in greater detail by another reflector character.) In any case, the passage cannot possibly be focalized by Jon: as a flashforward, it presents objective information that Jon does not yet possess (i.e., he is yet to embark on the journey and affectionately remember his sister's laughter); as a temporal summary, it breaks with Jon's close internal focalization on the here and now of the story. Thus, the focalizer can only be the covert narrator, the only narrative agent that has access to such a privileged view. (Nevertheless, Jon's consciousness is focalized on: "The memory of her laughter warmed him" marks external focalization from within.)

A more obvious break from close internal focalization on story time comes in the passage that finds Dany making love to her new husband, Khal Drogo, the leader of a

tribe of nomadic plainspeople called the Dothraki. Like the Jon passage above, this one, too, concludes the chapter. Note the sudden shift in story time between the first and the second paragraph:

There is no privacy in the heart of the *khalasar*. Dany felt the eyes on her as she undressed him, heard the soft voices as she did the things that Doreah had told her to do. It was nothing to her. Was she not *khaleesi*? His were the only eyes that mattered, and when she mounted him she saw something there that she had never seen before. She rode him as fiercely as ever she had ridden her silver, and when the moment of his pleasure came, Khal Drogo called out her name.

They were on the far side of the Dothraki sea when Jhiqui brushed the soft swell of Dany's stomach with her fingers and said, "*Khaleesi*, you are with child."

"I know," Dany told her.

It was her fourteenth name day. (Martin 236)

The now of aggressive love-making and the now of Dany's softly swollen stomach are separated by at least two or three months of story time, whereas the rest of the chapter spans no more than a day. The intervening period, the travel across the plains, is simply omitted, marking a striking departure from the relatively slow pace that characterizes the chapter (and, indeed, the whole novel). While the narration up to and including the love-making scene is focalized from Dany's internal perspective, the last three paragraphs stand somewhere between internal and external focalization. On the one hand, the dominance of internal focalization throughout the chapter, and the continued use of familiarizing denomination ("Dany" rather than "Daenerys" or "Daenerys Targaryen") suggest that the ending should be read as internally focalized. On the other hand, the spatially abstract quality of the closing moment (the physical scene is not described in any detail), the lack of internal perspective (Dany's thoughts are not rendered), and the sudden shift in story time itself may evoke an external perspective. The closing segment actually reads more like a narratorial statement on pregnancy than a scenic rendering of pregnancy. Moreover, it is a dramatic statement: the sudden shift in time, together with the somber "It was her fourteenth name day" (i.e., she is now



fourteen years old), end the chapter with dramatic flourish. It is clearly a strategic move by the narrator, perhaps too overt to pass as internal focalization.

In Martin, such excursions into authorial narration are often found either at the start of a chapter or at the very end, as in the two examples above, and rarely span more than a paragraph or two. Their function is almost always the same: to dramatically accentuate the moment, and possibly to foreshadow what is to come.

It should be noted that the representation of story time in Martin is, of course, subject to constant modulation of speed or pace. Not everything is narrated in equal detail. Some actions and events are observed very closely and with attention to detail, while others are passed over with only cursory scenic reflection. Some story time is always omitted or assumed to have passed, as it is neither possible nor desirable to count every atom as it falls on the mind, and sometimes story time simply seems to stop when enough description enters the narration. Much like any other modern novel, the narrative is fraught with accelerations and decelerations, ellipses and descriptive pauses (see Jahn N5.2.3.; Rimmon-Kenan 53). This modulation is motivated by the reflector character's interests on the one hand, and the needs of storytelling on the other.

The important point is that in Martin this modulation is almost always embedded in internal focalization. It does not break the overall temporal synchrony because the framework of internal focalization does not allow it to spill into extended temporal summaries or authorial shifts in story time, that is, into temporal panchrony. Because the modulation is itself, as a rule, internally focalized, it cannot but adhere to the present of the focalizer.

In Leiber, the situation is much the same despite the external focalization. Even though accelerations and decelerations of story time, ellipses, and descriptive pauses are typically externally focalized, the focalization is mostly restricted to the present of the

characters. To be sure, the temporal synchrony is not quite as close or scenic as in Martin, the modulations in pace tend to be more pronounced, and the representation of story time sometimes extends into panchrony through retrospective temporal summaries and authorial shifts. Nonetheless, Leiber's narrative as a whole follows the actions and events as they unfold in present time. Even the temporal summaries typically speed up the present rather than the past or the future.

### **2.3. Knowledge and Reflection**

As mentioned earlier, Rimmon-Kenan distinguishes between two psychological aspects of focalization: "the cognitive and the emotive orientation of the focalizer towards the focalized" (80). The first aspect, cognitive orientation, comprises the focalizer's knowledge, beliefs, conjectures, and memory (*ibid.*). External focalization is here aligned with unrestricted knowledge whereas internal focalization corresponds to restricted knowledge (*ibid.*; see Stanzel 113, 126). A narrator-focalizer knows, in principle, "everything about the represented world, and when he restricts his knowledge, he does so out of rhetorical considerations" (Rimmon-Kenan 80). An internal focalizer, on the other hand, is necessarily restricted to his or her own subjective perspective, and can therefore know only so much (*ibid.*).

Although Rimmon-Kenan does not explicitly make the point, I consider cognition to also include reflection. That is, cognition is here conceived as a markedly active mental process. More than mere knowledge, cognition is about knowing as a process of awareness and reflection. It is an act of consciousness. As such, it also includes, or at least overlaps with, perception of story space and story time. Perception of space and time is not only informed by knowledge but also constitutes a kind of knowledge in its own right. Knowledge, in turn, is already a kind of perception. In short, to perceive is to

know and to know is to perceive. The distinction between spatial and temporal perception on the one hand, and cognition on the other is thus more a heuristic construct to help facilitate discussion, rather than a hard and fast boundary between types of perception and focalization.

### 2.3.1. Leiber

Much like spatial focalization, focalization that thematizes knowledge and reflection comes in a variety of shapes and sizes in Leiber, spanning the entire divide between the external and the internal, including a good number of ambiguous cases that cannot be comfortably assigned to either pole. At the authorial end of the spectrum, we find the omniscient narrator elaborating on the story world, providing information that goes beyond the private knowledge of any individual character. The following presents a typical example of the jovial narrator opening a subsection with just such knowledge:

Nehwon – a vast bubble leaping up for ever through the waters of eternity. Like airy champagne . . . or, to certain moralists, like a globe of stinking gas from the slimiest, most worm-infested marsh.

Lankhmar – a continent firm-seated on the solid watery inside of the bubble called Nehwon. With mountains, hills, towns, plains, a crooked coastline, deserts, lakes, marshes too, and grainfields – especially grainfields, source of the continent’s wealth, to either side of the Hlal, greatest of rivers. (Leiber, *Swords* 79)

The quote begins an elaborate spatial zoom, complete with geographic exposition, that starts out with a short comment on Nehwon, Leiber’s story world, and ends in an antechamber inside the Rainbow Palace in the City of Lankhmar (see Leiber, *Swords* 79–80). In addition to sporting a panoramic overview that clearly transcends the perspective of any individual character, the above passage also draws on world knowledge that can only be authorial: Nehwon is explicitly identified as “a vast bubble leaping up for ever through the waters of eternity” with Lankhmar firmly seated on its “solid watery inside”. This is authorial information because the narrative has already

established that, from the perspective of story world inhabitants, the bubble view is merely a “hypothesis currently favored by Lankhmar philosophers” rather than a popular truth (Leiber, *Swords* 12). Fafhrd, for example, believes that the world is located inside “the jewel-ceilinged skull of a dead god” (Leiber, *Swords* 25). (Note how the passage also echoes the narrator’s characteristically playful, even satirical voice that further underscores the authorial perspective: “Like airy champagne . . . or, to certain moralists, like a globe of stinking gas”.)

A second authorial maneuver that is extensively used in Leiber is collective focalization on multiple minds in the process of cognition. Here the narrator focalizes on what two or more characters are thinking about or reflecting upon. That is, multiple minds are narrated as thinking the same thing. While the object of focalization may be figural knowledge and reflection, the ability to simultaneously access the contents of multiple minds necessarily betrays an authorial perspective, a kind of authorial knowledge.<sup>12</sup> Consider, for example, the following passage which finds Glipkerio and Samanda lounging about in Glipkerio’s Whip Room, “reminiscing and getting a tipsy glow on, to put them in the right mood” for torturing an insubordinate palace maid (Leiber, *Swords* 194). Observe how the two characters’ minds are focalized:

Now, for the nonce neglecting all the rare and begemmed instruments of pain around them and blessedly forgetting the rodent menace to Lankhmar, their thoughts had returned to simpler and happier days. Glipkerio, his pansy wreath awry and somewhat wilted, was saying with a tittering eagerness, ‘Do you recall when I brought you my first kitten to throw in the kitchen fire?’ (Leiber, *Swords* 195)

Collective focalization on cognition is here marked by the phrases “blessedly *forgetting* the rodent menace to Lankhmar” and “their *thoughts* had returned to simpler and

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<sup>12</sup> Arguably, any access to another’s consciousness is authorial by default. However, in figural narration this narratorial authority is a covert and subdued one. Figural narration is recuperated in terms of a direct access to another’s consciousness, rather than as authorially mediated access, which is the case with authorial narration.

happier days” (“neglecting” may or may not refer to a cognitive process yet is equally collective all the same). Both phrases construe Glipekrio and Samanda as a kind of cognitive unit rather than as two individuals with independent minds. This is external focalization by definition. The authorial cast of the passage is accentuated by the subtle satire in the narrator’s focalization on Glipekrio: “his pansy wreath *awry* and somewhat *wilted* . . . a *tittering* eagerness”. Lankhmar’s overlord, with his shabby floral wreath and nervous manners, emerges as an effeminate and even ridiculous character, that is, as anything but lordly. Although the narrator’s voice is not particularly distinct in the passage, external focalization (collective focalization coupled with narratorial satire) is nevertheless quite pronounced. (The “blessedly” in the first sentence could, perhaps, be construed as a subjectivity marker evoking brief reflectorization (see page 50 below).)

Like collective focalization, consecutive focalization is an authorial technique that also coincides with external focalization on cognition (see consecutive focalization on space in section 2.2.1. above). In consecutive focalization on cognition, the narrator moves between multiple inside views of characters, presenting what various characters are thinking about or reflecting upon at different locations. As with consecutive focalization on space, authorial agency is here implicit in the narrator’s privilege to shift the focus of focalization at will. This is a common technique in Leiber, and sometimes highly conspicuous, as in the following passage which begins with Fafhrd, perched on the roof of a temple, watching as three ghouls on horseback join Lankhmar’s ancient mummy gods in their battle against the invading rats:

Seated on the three black horses were three tall skeletons gleaming white in the moonlight, and with a lover’s certainty he [Fafhrd] recognized the first as being Kreeshkra’s.

She might, of course, be seeking him out to slay him for his faithlessness. Nevertheless, as almost any other lover in like circumstances – though seldom, true, near the midst of a natural-supernatural battle – he grinned a rather egotistic grin.

He lost not a moment in beginning his descent.

Meanwhile Kreeshkra, for it was indeed she, was thinking as she gazed at the Gods of Lankhmar. *Well, I suppose brown bones are better than none at all. Still, they seem a poor fire risk. Ho, here come more rats! What a filthy city! And where oh where is my abominable Mud Man?*

The black kitten mewed anxiously at the temple's foot where he awaited Fafhrd's arrival. (Leiber, *Swords* 213)

The first three paragraphs are roughly anchored to Fafhrd's cognitive and spatial perspective (indeed, the entire scene thus far has been externally focalized from within Fafhrd's lofty perspective). The opening sentence of the second paragraph ("She might, of course, be seeking him out to slay him for his faithlessness") actually approaches internal focalization in the empathic manner in which it paraphrases Fafhrd's inner ruminations (note especially the emphatic "of course"). However, as Fafhrd begins his climb down, the focalization suddenly shifts to Kreeshkra, and we are afforded a passing glimpse inside her mind via interior monologue. The second and final, and equally sudden shift takes us to the black kitten at the temple's foot. The focalization on the kitten may not qualify as cognitive in orientation, and although the last paragraph eschews any distinction between external focalization from within and from without on a purely textual level, the overall effect, to my mind, nevertheless evokes an anxious consciousness ("mewed anxiously" and "awaited" are enough to suggest mentation).

Despite courting internal focalization, however, the passage is clearly authorial in tone and texture. The second half of the second paragraph ("Nevertheless, as almost any other lover in like circumstances . . . he grinned a rather egotistic grin." (ibid.)) reads more like narratorial commentary and description than a rendering of what is going on inside Fafhrd's mind. Also, while Kreeshkra's thoughts are rendered verbatim in interior monologue, their framing is manifestly authorial: "Meanwhile Kreeshkra, for it was indeed she, was thinking" marks an authorial move that signals a shift in focalization ("Meanwhile"), explicitly sets up the interior monologue ("Kreeshkra . . . was thinking"), and even allows the narrator to confirm Fafhrd's earlier recognition of

Kreeshkra (“it was indeed she”) (ibid.). Coupled with the pronounced consecutive focalization, and the norm of external focalization already established for the scene (see Leiber, *Swords* 212–13), such discourse makes the narrator’s authority hard to miss.

Fixed external focalization from within, or external focalization that sticks to a single consciousness rather than overtly juggling multiple minds, is much more common in Leiber than either collective or consecutive focalization. More often than not, the narrative is anchored to either Fafhrd or the Mouser (or near enough as to make little difference). In terms of cognition, as well as in general, the prototypical narrative pattern is one that embeds an approximation or adoption of either character’s viewpoint within an authorially oriented frame. This is especially true for the second half of the novel, in which Fafhrd and the Mouser, following their adventure at sea, embark on their separate journeys, and the narrative begins to focus more closely and consistently on either one at a time. The following glimpse of the dreaming Mouser’s mind presents a characteristic example of a main character’s inner landscape as mediated through the authorial narrator’s external perspective:

Now he slept the sleep of exhaustion, his mind just beginning to be tickled by dreams of the glory that would be his when, under the eyes of Glipkerio, he would prove himself Hisvin’s superior at blasting rats. His dreams did not take account of the fact that Hisvin could hardly be counted a blaster of rats, but rather their ally – unless the wily grain-merchant had decided it was time to change sides. (Leiber, *Swords* 115)

The first sentence renders the Mouser’s mind from within in a relatively straightforward manner. While hardly internal focalization as such, the sentence adheres faithfully to the Mouser’s dreaming perspective: the sentence reveals nothing that the Mouser himself would not know about his dreams while dreaming them. However, the second sentence clearly spills over into narratorial commentary: what the Mouser’s dreams fail to account for – that Hisvin is actually scheming with the rats – is knowledge that the Mouser does not yet possess. By definition, this is authorial knowledge. Indeed, the

opening “His dreams did not take account of the fact” already states as much, and quite overtly to boot.

Both Stanzel and Rimmon-Kenan (who is drawing on Seymour Chatman’s signs of narratorial overttness) have identified this sort of maneuver, reporting something that a character did not know or think, as a distinctly authorial strategy (see Rimmon-Kenan 99; Stanzel 197). It is perhaps a testimony to the figural tendencies in Leiber that this device, the second most overt marker of narratorial presence (Rimmon-Kenan 99), finds very little use in *The Swords of Lankhmar*.

Reports of what will happen are similarly few and far between. Leiber’s narrator discloses his knowledge of the future only on the rare occasion when the reader could do with information about what will happen after the story ends, or when the logic of suspense dictates a dramatic note. In the latter case, the narrator’s authorial knowledge is usually suggested rather than made explicit. For example, this dramatic insert interrupts a scene in which the Mouser, oblivious to the world around him, is engaged in ecstatic foreplay with Hisvet and Frix: “The Mouser might never have known what happened next – and it might have been a direly different happening too – if it had not been that, never satisfied even with the most supreme ecstasy, he decided once more to disobey Hisvet’s explicit injunction and steal a glance at Frix” (Leiber, *Swords* 99). Frix, of course, is looking over the Mouser’s shoulder at the two assassins sneaking up on him, and it is only by chance that the Mouser divines this and is able to escape the trap. The opening clause (“The Mouser might never have known what happened next”) suggests authorial foreknowledge: the narrator already knows that which the Mouser is about to find out, that two assassins are about to attack him. This foreshadowing is dramatically accentuated in the second clause (“and it might have been a direly different



happening too”) which implies that the assassins might have succeeded in killing the unsuspecting Mouser on the spot if not for his serendipitous disobedience.

Despite the authorially motivated opening clauses, however, the passage does not explicitly present authorial knowledge: what might have happened is never elaborated upon. Moreover, the conditional “might” constructions suggest strategically limited omniscience rather than omniscience as such. In other words, the narrator’s aim is not to tell the reader what would have happened next had things gone differently for the Mouser (an unnecessary narrative act if ever there was one), but to build suspense by suggesting that things could have gone differently for him. Such subtly authorial narration tallies nicely with the surrounding narrative which adheres closely to the Mouser’s restricted perspective: the overall figural perspectivism will most likely subsume the brief authorial insert in the reading process.

The following passage from the denouement of the rat invasion provides a less ambiguous example of authorial knowledge about the future:

Their work done, the War cats regathered at the place where Fafhrd had summoned them and there faded away even as they had earlier materialized. They were still thirteen, although they had lost one of their company, for the black kitten faded away with them, comporting himself like an apprentice member of their company. It was ever afterwards believed, by most Lankhmarts, that the War Cats and the white skeletons as well had been summoned by the Gods of Lankhmar, whose reputation for horrid powers and dire activities was thereby bolstered, despite some guilty recollections of their temporary defeat by the rats. (Leiber, *Swords* 225)

From external focalization on the War Cats’ departure in present time, the narrative shifts briefly (“It was ever afterwards believed”) to collective focalization on the Lankhmarts’ subsequent (and mistaken) belief in the origins of the cats and the three skeleton-like ghouls. This quick glimpse into the future caps the already authorial orientation of the subsection of which it is a part. (The subsection is, in fact, the last panoramically narrated interlude to survey the rat invasion.) Situated as it is amongst external focalization, the glimpse, itself a doubly authorial maneuver, meshes with its

narrative surroundings even more unobtrusively than the implicitly authorial insert in the previous example.

The figural end of cognition also finds solid representation in Leiber, even though it remains subordinate to the authorial. Here, the focalization on knowledge and reflection is internal, and thus restricted to what the reflector character knows or is thinking about. Fafhrd's private speculations about the invading army present a markedly figural example. Fafhrd knows only what Ningauble has told him, that Lankhmar has been invaded by "a fierce host which outnumbers Lankhmar's inhabitants by . . . fifty to one" and that there is "desperate fighting going on in the streets" (Leiber, *Swords* 144). But when Fafhrd enters the city under cover of darkness, he finds the streets before him empty and silent, with neither friend nor foe in sight:

Fafhrd felt spooked. Had the conquerors of Lankhmar already departed? – carrying off all its treasure and inhabitants in some unimaginably huge fleet or caravan? Had they shut up themselves and their gagged victims in the silent houses for some rite of mass torture in darkness? Was it a demon, not human army which had beset the city and vanished its inhabitants? Had the very earth gaped for victor and vanquished alike and then shut again? Or was Ningauble's whole tale wizardly flimflam? – yet even that least unlikely explanation still left unexplained the city's ghostly desolation.

Or was there a fierce battle going on under his eyes at this very moment, and he by some spell of Ningauble or Sheelba unable to see, hear, or even scent it? – until, perchance, he had fulfilled the geas of the bells which Ningauble had laid on him. (Leiber, *Swords* 193)

The passage reads like a faithful, if verbally elaborate, rendering of questions running through Fafhrd's perplexed mind. At no point does it transcend Fafhrd's subjective knowledge about the supposed invaders. Fafhrd, of course, does not yet know that the invaders are actually Lankhmar's own ambitious rats, that the rats have yet to launch their main attack, and that much of the human populace has been herded into specific parts of the city (which explains the "ghostly desolation"). Fafhrd's mistaken notion about an invisible army marks one of the novel's most pronounced and consistently thematized epistemological gaps (see Leiber, *Swords* 193–94, 203–04).

The gap exists only for the character, however. The reader, at this point, knows much more than Fafhrd: that the invaders are rats, that their main attack is yet to commence, and that the Lankhmarts have been lured into particular areas so as to better contain their numbers. Fafhrd's ruminations clearly represent internally focalized cognition, but their perspectival effect is a strangely subdued one. Why such a lengthy reflection when the reader already knows what is going on in Lankhmar? There are obviously no grounds for suspense as that would require the reader to know no more than Fafhrd, nor is there any dramatic irony to be mined from Fafhrd's storyline that would justify the different knowledge states. In short, the restricted knowledge packs zero dramatic punch. At best, the passage serves to set Fafhrd's outlandishly wild imagination in comic relief against the more mundanely fantastic truth (i.e., an army of clever rats). But as a piece of figural narration, the passage is undone, its subjective force defused, by the authorial context that has already informed the reader of everything necessary: the subjectivity serves no significant purpose. (For a Leiber passage that combines internal focalization on cognition with a solid dramatic function that stems from the reader knowing as little as the reflector character, see the morning-after scene which finds Fafhrd in bed with the calf (Leiber, *Swords* 74–76).)

In Leiber, the reader generally knows more than the characters. Information that is pertinent to the plot is typically more readily available to the former than to the latter, namely Fafhrd and the Mouser who frequently find themselves fumbling in marked (and often comic) ignorance. As Stanzel observes, an authorial narrator “guarantees that all the information required to understand the story will be made available to the reader as he needs it” (160, see 153–54). Leiber's narrator certainly follows the same pattern, whether through explicit authorial exposition or by shifting focalization between different characters and locations. Despite the reflectoral representations of restricted

knowledge, the overall knowledge structure in Leiber is clearly authorial. Indeed, the reliably informative authorial context may actually hamper such reflectoral representations, as in the above example. (The Fafhrd passage featuring the calf works so well because in it Fafhrd's restricted knowledge is rooted in his equally restricted, in-the-moment sensory perceptions which literally leave the reader in a similar "darkness".)

Leiber's narrative also sports a number of ambiguous cases where cognitively oriented focalization seems to originate from a subjectivity located somewhere between the two ontologies of character and narrator. The ambiguous story-internal perspective discussed under spatial focalization describes the same phenomenon (see section 2.2.1. above). Both Stanzel and Fludernik have discussed this technique at length, and I will follow their example in calling it *reflectorization*. They define reflectorization in slightly different terms, with Fludernik reworking Stanzel's original proposal into her own narratological model, yet the differences between them are negligible for my present purposes. Reflectorization is here defined minimally as focalization which projects an apparently story-internal position that approaches the subjective mindset or perspective of one or more characters in the story world (Stanzel 168–84, 198–200; Fludernik, *Narratology* 179–92, 201–11, 213–21).<sup>13</sup> The resulting "metaconsciousness", to use Stanzel's term, is neither individualized enough to correspond to any single character, nor external enough to correspond exclusively to the authorial narrator located, by definition, outside the story world (see Stanzel 177). Reflectorization can thus be thought of as a covertly authorial maneuver that evokes a nonspecific focalizing

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<sup>13</sup> The main difference between Stanzel's original proposal and Fludernik's revised one is that whereas the former explicitly attributes the reflectorized metaconsciousness to a narrator pretending to function as a figural medium, the latter considers this attribution to be an inevitable interpretative move rather than a textual reality as such (see Stanzel 170, 198; Fludernik, *Narratology* 182).

subjectivity on the story level (i.e., as external focalization that mimics internal focalization).

In Leiber, reflectorization typically takes the form of a collective voice that empathically reflects the shared perspective of a group of characters, and it seems to be most common in the sea voyage section, possibly eclipsing internal focalization as the dominant device for representing figural subjectivity. (It is not always possible to distinguish between external focalization, reflectorization, and internal focalization, as the techniques tend to bleed into one another in actual usage.) That the sea voyage section also collects all the characters in one place is probably no coincidence. The reduced necessity of the narrative to focus on individual characters provides an ideal platform for reflectorization as a collective voice, especially in an authorial narrative that displays distinct figural tendencies. Reflectorization, after all, allows external focalization to shift toward internal focalization without completely siphoning away authorial privileges in the process.

The most interesting of Leiber's reflectorized passages, and possibly the most pronounced, is the first Karl Treuherz episode, which is also the former of only two passages in the novel to include footnotes (see Leiber, *Swords* 24–28). The focalization in the episode is complex. Besides the narrator's external observations, the episode also contains a number of inside views that range from a page's worth of focalization keyed to Fafhrd to brief authorial glimpses inside the Mouser and Slinoor, a possible glimpse inside Hisvet, and a few explicit shifts into collective perception. The overall effect, however, is one in which these shifts in focalization seem to fuse into a kind of collective story-internal focus on the main event: the inexplicable Karl Treuherz, a traveler from another world, and the two-headed dragon that he rides.

The episode begins with Fafhrd, who is closest to the dragon when it suddenly materializes out of the fog surrounding the ship. Fafhrd's initial shock at seeing two monstrous heads strike out from the fog is focalized externally by the narrator, but as Karl Treuherz, "a man dressed in orange and purple" (Leiber, *Swords* 25), comes into view, the narrative begins to shift into a mode resembling internal focalization. Fafhrd is here staring at the man-on-a-dragon, and finds that it is all a bit too much for him:

There is a point of grotesquerie beyond which horror cannot go, but slips into delirium. Fafhrd had reached that point. He began to feel as if he were in an opium dream. Everything was unquestionably real, yet it had lost its power to horrify him acutely.

He noticed as the merest of quaint details that the two greenish yellow necks forked from a common trunk.

Besides, the gaudily garbed man or demon riding the larger head seemed very sure of himself, which might or might not be a good thing. Just now he was belaboring the smaller head, seemingly in rebuke, with a blunt-pointed, blunt-hooked pike he carried, and roaring out, either under or through his blue-red helmet, a gibberish that might be rendered as:

‘*Gottverdammter Ungeheuer!*’ (ibid.)

The opening sentence is a gnomic statement about the nature of grotesquerie, and hence authorial. The remainder of the paragraph and the short second paragraph describe in neutral, uninvolved terms what Fafhrd perceives and feels, and therefore also constitute external rather than internal focalization. However, the third paragraph already displays a pronounced figural orientation. The perspective clearly belongs to someone on the scene who does not know who or what the strange rider is (“the gaudily garbed *man or demon*”), someone who is unsure of many things (“*seemed* very sure of himself, which *might or might not* be a good thing”, “*seemingly* in rebuke”, “roaring out, *either under or through* his blue-red helmet”), who exists in the now of story time (“*Just now* he was belaboring”), and for whom the rider’s language is “gibberish”. But is this necessarily Fafhrd’s subjective perspective?

Fafhrd is certainly the only character available who could, at this point, function as the reflector. Yet the rest of the episode never reaches quite the same figural flavor that the third paragraph possesses. Furthermore, the narrative soon shifts focus from

Fafhrd to the Mouser (who is literally “jealous of Fafhrd holding the center of the stage” (Leiber, *Swords* 26)). Fafhrd’s reflector status is thus momentary at best. The paragraph also contains zero reference to the observer. The paragraph clearly presents a subjective rendering of the scene, yet the perceiving subjectivity is not named, either by name or personal pronoun, nor is there any reference to the act of perceiving itself. The person reference could arguably be borrowed from the “He” in the preceding paragraph, and in the reading process it probably is. But the lack of explicit denomination nevertheless gives the third paragraph a subtle quality of referentless subjectivity which suggests reflectorization. Finally, the concluding “a gibberish that might be rendered as” reads almost like a comment on the narration itself, momentarily pulling the narrative perspective back toward the authorial (ibid.).

The fourth paragraph, the German “gibberish”, interestingly enough serves both ends, supporting both the narrator’s external perspective and a restricted story-internal one. The reason for this is that the paragraph comes with a footnote: “‘Goddam monster!’ German is a language completely unknown in Nehwon” (ibid.). The footnote, of course, is an authorial maneuver by definition. As Rimmon-Kenan notes, “the very use of a footnote in a work of fiction is unusual and automatically draws attention to the presence of a narrator reflecting on his own narration” (101). Leiber’s footnote not only highlights the narrator’s presence, but also evokes his authorial knowledge: the narrator knows what is “completely unknown” in the story world, that the language is German, and that the short line translates as a curse. The figural end, on the other hand, is served by the fact that the narrator’s omniscience is effectively relegated to the footnote, allowing the narrative proper to present Karl Treuherz’s words as they appear to the characters: as gibberish (i.e., in German). Despite the authorial elements, the narrative is

strategically restricted to a “Nehwonian” horizon of cognition and knowledge (Fafhrd’s or otherwise).

The episode contains three further footnotes, all of which function like the first one, that is, as translations which allow the narrative to render Karl Treuherz’s lines in their original “gibberish”. (The other section in the novel to employ footnotes is the second Karl Treuherz episode (see Leiber, *Swords* 69–73). In that section, however, the footnotes merely function to underscore the already pronounced narratorial presence and external focalization.)

The figural flavor continues throughout the episode. Besides Fafhrd, the narrative focuses on three other characters on the deck, with the odd complementary glimpse at or through collective consciousness. The Mouser’s mind is the first to be penetrated after Fafhrd’s: “Then, *grown less fearful* of the two heads and *somewhat jealous* of Fafhrd holding the center of the stage, the Mouser leapt atop the taffrail” (Leiber, *Swords* 26; emphases added). Slinoor’s thoughts, too, receive brief attention: “The description *awakened a memory* in Slinoor, who managed to *nerve* himself to explain audibly” (Leiber, *Swords* 27; emphases added). Toward the end of the episode, the narrative shifts momentarily to Hisvet: “Hisvet, who had been listening from the middeck, *chose* that moment to climb the short ladder that led up to the afterdeck” (ibid.; emphasis added). The word “chose” could signal focalization on Hisvet’s inner decision to join the other characters at the ship’s stern. Between the Slinoor and Hisvet segments, there is, furthermore, an offhand aside that presents collective focalization: “The man-demon was voluble in his thanks and after questioning Slinoor closely announced (*rather to everyone’s relief*) that he was now ready to turn his search eastward with new hope” (ibid.; emphasis added). Finally, the episode ends with what can only be reflectorized focalization on space: “Then the two-headed monster with its orange-and-purple mahout



could be dimly seen moving around *Squid*'s stern eastward into thicker fog, the man-demon gibbering gentler what might have been an excuse and farewell: *'Es tut mir sehr leid! Aber dankeschoen, dankeschoen!'*" (ibid.). Here, the spatially restricted "could be dimly seen" corresponds to no single character, and must therefore belong to no one and everyone (much like the "now and again the sun's rays twinkled on a peering eye or silvered fingernail" that was discussed in section 2.2.1. above). The effect is enforced by the conditional "what might have been an excuse and farewell" that extends the reflectorized perspective.

Even though none of these character moments develops into internal focalization as such, there is an unmistakable figural flavor to the entire episode. Between the Fafhrd segment and the three minor character segments, the collective perspectives and the footnoted omniscience, there is enough figural counterweight to the authorial context to suspend the episode between external and internal focalization. (Even the denomination is consistently subjective in that it delays naming "Karl Treuherz" until he explicitly introduces himself to the other characters.) The narrative perspective seems to correspond roughly to Fafhrd's, and later to that of anyone and everyone on the ship's deck, yet it is clearly never restricted to any particular character by way of fully fledged internal focalization. This hesitation between the authorial and the figural results in what could be described as a collective Nehwonian interpretative horizon. By explicitly casting the inexplicable Karl Treuherz as an alien Other, it comes to implicitly include anyone and everyone on the ship.

### **2.3.2. Martin**

In Martin, unsurprisingly enough, there is no reflectorization, cognitively oriented or otherwise. Nor is there much in the way of authorial knowledge. As with spatial and

temporal focalization, cognitively oriented focalization in Martin is restricted almost exclusively to internal focalization. Both collective and consecutive focalization are nonexistent. Issues relating to knowledge and reflection are thus markedly figural in their narrative form, much more so than the corresponding elements in Leiber. In Martin, the reader typically knows no more than the reflector characters, which is to say that the reader is usually left in the same epistemological darkness as the reflectors. (The astute reader will, of course, guess many things, but these guesses are not explicitly addressed until a reflector comes by with the appropriate knowledge, or hazards a similar guess.)

Martin's reflector characters often focalize the same object differently in accordance with their individual perspectives (and cognitive limitations). The different perspectives qualify and relativize one another, contrasting the characters in revealing ways, and produce a dynamic and multilayered view of the story world and the objects it contains. Take, for example, the young knight whom Ser Gregor kills in the Hand's tourney. The young knight's seemingly accidental death is initially focalized through Sansa, who is watching the tourney from the gallery: "The most terrifying moment of the day came during Ser Gregor's second joust, when his lance rode up and struck a young knight from the Vale under the gorget with such force that it drove through his throat, killing him instantly. The youth fell not ten feet from where Sansa was seated" (Martin 295). Sansa's focalization identifies the knight simply as "a young knight". To her, he is just another knight without a name (unlike the infamous Ser Gregor the Mountain, whom everyone knows).

The narrative continues with Sansa's almost morbid fascination with the dead youth on the ground:

The point of Ser Gregor's lance had snapped off in his neck, and his life's blood flowed out in slow pulses, each weaker than the one before. His armor was shiny new; a bright streak of fire ran down his outstretched arm, as the steel caught the light. Then the sun went behind a cloud, and it was gone. His cloak was blue, the color of the sky on a clear summer's day, trimmed with a border of crescent moons, but as his blood seeped into it, the cloth darkened and the moons turned red, one by one.

Jeyne Poole wept so hysterically that Septa Mordane finally took her off to regain her composure, but Sansa sat with her hands folded in her lap, watching with a strange fascination. She had never seen a man die before. She ought to be crying too, she thought, but the tears would not come. Perhaps she had used up all her tears for Lady and Bran. It would be different if it had been Jory or Ser Rodrik or Father, she told herself. The young knight in the blue cloak was nothing to her, some stranger from the Vale of Arryn whose name she had forgotten as soon as she heard it. And now the world would forget his name too, Sansa realized; there would be no songs sung for him. That was sad. (Martin 295–96).

The close focus on the dead knight's "shiny new" armor catching the light of the sun and his beautiful blue cloak slowly drinking his blood, coupled with Sansa's silent, cold reflection on death as her hysterical best friend is taken away, clearly make this passage about Sansa's encounter with death in general, rather than with the young knight's death in particular. Indeed, as a person, he is "nothing to her, some stranger . . . whose name she had forgotten as soon as she heard it." Sansa knows next to nothing about the knight, and he therefore remains merely a nameless nobody. It is death, rather than the dead person, that she watches "with a strange fascination." There is nothing to suggest that the knight is in any way special, that his death was anything but an unfortunate jousting accident, a "sad" affair.

The first hint of a sinister subtext to the young knight's death comes toward the end of the same chapter, when the Hound, Ser Gregor's brother, lets slip in his drunken stupor that Gregor knew that the young knight's gorget was not properly fastened, and that "Gregor's lance goes where Gregor wants it to go" (Martin 302). But Sansa, a girl of eleven who is here mostly terrified of the Hound and his badly scarred face, makes nothing of this, much less questions him about it, and thus the narrative never lingers on the Hound's words.

It is not until the next chapter, with Eddard Stark, Sansa's father, as the reflector, that the reader discovers who the young knight was, and what the sinister subtext is. The chapter opens with Eddard ("Ned") studying the young knight's body after it has been prepared for burial:

In the pale dawn light, the young knight looked as though he were sleeping. He had not been handsome, but death had smoothed his rough-hewn features and the silent sisters had dressed him in his best velvet tunic, with a high collar to cover the ruin the lance had made of his throat. Eddard Stark looked at his face, and wondered if it had been for his sake that the boy had died. Slain by a Lannister bannerman before Ned could speak to him; could that be mere happenstance? He supposed he would never know.

"Hugh was Jon Arryn's squire for four years," Selmy went on. (Martin 305)

The young knight, Hugh, used to squire for Jon Arryn, Eddard's predecessor as the King's Hand, who died under mysterious circumstances, and whose death Eddard has been investigating. Eddard suspects the Lannisters, and Hugh was his last hope to implicate them. Ser Gregor, of course, is the Lannister bannerman who killed Hugh. The young knight thus turns out to be a likely pawn in a deadly conspiracy. However, this is not actually verified. Eddard, like the reader, can, at this point, only guess at Hugh's possible role based on what little he knows (which, in fact, is even less than what the reader knows, since Eddard was not privy to the conversation between Sansa and the Hound).

What is significant here is how consistent internal focalization allows Martin to develop a seemingly innocent scene (a random if ghastly accident witnessed by one character) into something more meaningful (a likely assassination suspected by another character). The fact that this "meaningfulness" is suggested rather than explicitly established only enforces the figural quality of the narrative: it highlights the fundamentally restricted nature of a reflector character's cognitive perspective and the provisional quality of subjective knowledge.

Another even more subtly woven story strand involving a gap runs through the entire narrative. (Indeed, it extends well beyond the present novel, its repercussions possibly spanning the entire series.) This strand begins with the one historical event from which so much in the story present seems to derive: Rhaegar Targaryen's supposed abduction and rape of Lyanna Stark, and the fateful rebellion this action sparked. What really took place between Rhaegar and Lyanna, both since deceased, and what the full outcome was, constitute a central epistemological gap in the narrative. Not only is this gap among the most obscure in the novel, always suggested rather than spelled out, it is also left completely unresolved (see Martin 30, 43–44, 110–16, 199, 232, 380–81, 424–25, 631, 668, 710, 773). I will not discuss it at length, though, as this would only reiterate the point I have already made with the previous example. However, I will invite the reader to ponder if Rhaegar truly was the monster official history makes him out to be; if Rhaegar and Lyanna were not, in fact, lovers; if the mysterious promise which Lyanna pledged Eddard to make as she was dying might not have involved an illegitimate child with Rhaegar; and if this child might not actually be Jon, Eddard's bastard son whom he supposedly fathered during the rebellion. Martin's narrator, of course, provides no obvious answers.

Figural cognition in Martin is also frequently foregrounded on a more local level, and in a more pronounced form, in a reflector character's subjective and distinctive perspective on specific objects and events as informed by his or her cognitive (and emotive) horizon. A case in point is Bran's petulant mindset after most of his family and friends have been called away from Winterfell, leaving the crippled and still-recovering Bran, a boy of eight, very much alone:

It would never be the way it had been, he knew. The crow had tricked him into flying, but when he woke up he was broken and the world was changed. They had all left him, his father and his mother and his sisters and even his bastard brother Jon. His father had

promised he would ride a real horse to King's Landing, but they'd gone without him [. . .] to Bran it felt as if they had all died while he had slept . . . or perhaps Bran had died, and they had forgotten him. Jory and Ser Rodrik and Vayon Poole had gone too, and Hullen and Harwin and Fat Tom and a quarter of the guard.

Only Robb and baby Rickon were still here, and Robb was changed. He was Robb the Lord now, or trying to be. He wore a real sword and never smiled. His days were spent drilling the guard and practicing his swordplay, making the yard ring with the sound of steel as Bran watched forlornly from his window. (Martin 239)

The passage renders Bran's perceived abandonment poignantly. His perspective is clearly that of a child, and thus – as a child – he only focuses on his own needs. For Bran, then, it is all about *him* having been left behind (“They had all left *him*”, “they’d gone without *him*”, “they had forgotten *him*”). He was to have accompanied his father to the king’s court, but then he fell while climbing the tower, and “when he woke up he was broken and the world was changed.” Almost everyone he cares about is gone, and those that remain seem changed. It is a terrible reality to wake up to, and Bran’s reaction seems authentically a child’s reaction.

Bran, of course, does not know, or fails to understand, that his family and friends left while he was in a coma because they had no other choice. Robb, in turn, has his hands full in running Winterfell in their parents’ absence (as Bran will come to realize toward the end of the chapter (see Martin 248–49)). Bran’s perspective is skewed not only by his childish bitterness at the world (echoed in the resentful denomination of Robb as “Robb the Lord” (Martin 239)), but also by his limited knowledge and understanding of events. Yet notice how the passage never explicitly states Bran’s ignorance; rather, it is implicitly enacted in the narration. That is, the passage presents “thoughts which either reveal a lack of knowledge or are evoked by such a lack” (Stanzel 197). The result is a truthful, distinctly subjective rendering of an eight-year-old’s inner confusion over a world that seems to have abandoned him in his blight. Such pronounced internal focalization is highly typical of Martin, especially with the child reflectors (Bran, Arya, and Sansa).

A similar, if less frequent, figural phenomenon tracks a reflector character's changing awareness (or knowledge state) as informed by his or her immediate sensory perceptions. More specifically, the reflector character's full awareness of an object is delayed by a mistaken or impaired first impression. Observe how Sansa's internal focalization on the "scrawny" girl changes by the end of this passage:

Beyond, in a clearing overlooking the river, they came upon a boy and a girl playing at knights. Their swords were wooden sticks, broom handles from the look of them, and they were rushing across the grass, swinging at each other lustily. The boy was years older, a head taller, and much stronger, and he was pressing the attack. The girl, a scrawny thing in soiled leathers, was dodging and managing to get her stick in the way of most of the boy's blows, but not all. When she tried to lunge at him, he caught her stick with his own, swept it aside, and slid his wood down hard on her fingers. She cried out and lost her weapon.

Prince Joffrey laughed. The boy looked around, wide-eyed and startled, and dropped his stick in the grass. The girl glared at them, sucking on her knuckles to take the sting out, and Sansa was horrified. "*Arya?*" she called out incredulously. (Martin 149–50)

The revelation that the scrawny girl in dirty clothes is actually Arya, Sansa's younger sister, is delayed because Sansa's recognition of her is delayed. Whether it is because of all the dirt covering Arya, or the outrageous fact that she is "playing at knights" with a commoner, Sansa simply fails to cognize the "scrawny thing in soiled leathers" as her sister. It is only after she has observed the scene play itself out that she comes to the sudden and shocking realization as to who the girl really is. The narration, entrenched in Sansa's subjectivity, in no way betrays this. The clever reader may guess what the reflector character is yet to realize, but the narrative itself filters everything through Sansa's in-the-moment understanding of what she sees. Indeed, there is a deft figural touch to the narration that renders Sansa's horror ("and Sansa was horrified") before she is actually able to articulate the cause of this horror by incredulously calling out her sister's name: Sansa's momentary disorientation is projected into the reading process by having the effect immediately precede the cause in the text itself.

In Martin, the reader plainly depends on the reflector characters for access into the story world. Since much of this access has a pronounced subjective bent, the reader's

attempts at forming a clear picture of characters and events are continuously thwarted, even subverted. Where Leiber's narrator typically sees to it that the reader has all the pertinent information, Martin's narrator frequently omits or obscures precisely the pertinent bits. Or rather, the pertinent bits are omitted and obscured as a result of the reflectors being either misinformed or uninformed (Martin's narrator is, after all, a covert narrator). In this, Martin clearly follows what Stanzel considers a central principle of figural narration, that through a reflector:

a section of the fictional reality is isolated and spotlighted in such a way that all the details important for the reflector-character become discernible. Outside of this sector, however, there is darkness and uncertainty, a large area of indeterminacy, which the reader can penetrate only here and there by drawing inferences from the illuminated sector. (Stanzel 153)

Stanzel's metaphor of illuminated darkness fits Martin almost to a tee.

Despite Martin's preference for such illuminated darkness, however, there are passages which threaten to undermine the figural logic of restricted knowledge and reflection. By and large, these are related either to exposition or, to a lesser extent, to illicit omissions in internal focalization. Pronounced exposition is something of a given in fantasy as fantasy narratives typically need to set up not only a story but a strange new world as well. Authorially oriented narratives, Leiber's among them, obviously accommodate exposition better than figurally oriented ones, where the narration cannot, in principle, steer too far from what the reflector character would know and reflect upon at any given moment. Since Martin's story world is among the most richly detailed and textured in the genre, conflicts between exposition and realistic figural perspectivism are only to be expected. This is not to say that all exposition in Martin has an authorial flavor. On the contrary, much of the story world is not so much set up as sketched with small, subtle strokes, with the exposition carefully sprinkled across the narrative, making it all but imperceptible. My focus here, however, is on expositional passages



that are not so covertly backgrounded. (As exposition, such passages are analogous to the subjective flashbacks discussed in section 2.2.2. above, which provide necessary information while camouflaging themselves as reminiscence by a reflector character.)

Martin's narrative includes numerous brief instances that fall somewhere between overt and covert exposition. For example, the following passage, an excerpt from a conversation between Dany and his brother about a silk gown, ends in a sentence that is clearly expository in nature yet hardly a departure from the internal focalization that characterizes the passage as a whole:

Dany touched it. The cloth was so smooth that it seemed to run through her fingers like water. She could not remember ever wearing anything so soft. It frightened her. She pulled her hand away. "Is it really mine?"

"A gift from the Magister Illyrio," Viserys said, smiling. Her brother was in a high mood tonight. "The color will bring out the violet in your eyes. And you shall have gold as well, and jewels of all sorts. Illyrio has promised. Tonight you must look like a princess."

*A princess*, Dany thought. She had forgotten what that was like. Perhaps she had never really known. "Why does he give us so much?" she asked. "What does he want from us?" For nigh on half a year, they had lived in the magister's house, eating his food, pampered by his servants. Dany was thirteen, old enough to know that such gifts seldom come without their price, here in the free city of Pentos. (Martin 28)

The first two paragraphs represent straightforward internal focalization by Dany (with only a hint of exposition in "Her brother" which serves to qualify Viserys). The third paragraph opens with interior monologue, followed by Dany's internal focalization on her own thoughts (note especially the empathic "Perhaps" in "Perhaps she had never really known"). The penultimate sentence is informative in explaining the siblings' situation, yet it is easily recuperable as reminiscence sparked by Dany's verbalized concerns over Illyrio's seemingly altruistic generosity.

The closing sentence, however, seems to mix expository external focalization with internal focalization. The first two clauses ("Dany was thirteen, old enough to know that such gifts seldom come without their price" (ibid.)) do not sound like something the character herself would be thinking about. For one, Dany's age is given information for

her, and thus hardly in need of conscious acknowledgment. Second, “old enough to know” calls to mind a conventional judgment about someone else rather than one’s own evaluation of oneself. In short, it is difficult not to see the narrator at work here. The sentence clearly begins with an expository gesture that highlights the narrator’s role in providing information.<sup>14</sup> Yet the sentence also betrays an unmistakable figural orientation: it continues the familiarizing denomination (“Dany”) which suggests internal focalization, and the final clause locates the narrative perspective inside story space (“*here* in the free city of Pentos”), although even here there is a subtle trace of convenience in *where* it locates it (Pentos should, after all, be a non-issue for Dany who has been living there for quite some time). The exposition, then, marks an authorial touch on an otherwise figural canvas.

The exposition itself is understandable as this is the first chapter to feature Dany’s character, and her corner of the story world (which she is the sole reflector character to focalize firsthand). Dany’s age in particular is something the reader simply must know in order for the subsequent events to have their full dramatic impact (e.g., Dany’s arranged marriage to Khal Drogo, her painful nights in their marriage bed, the sudden responsibilities she is forced to shoulder).

Besides such fleeting instances of authorially motivated exposition, Martin’s narrative also includes its share of extended passages where the expository function is more conspicuous. The majority of these are subjective flashbacks, which, despite being embedded in figural narration, signal authorial agency by the convenient way they punctuate the narrative with pertinent information (see section 2.2.2. above). Another device that serves exposition is to have a reflector character overhear or listen to another

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<sup>14</sup> For comparison, omit the expository beginning and read the sentence simply as “Such gifts seldom came without their price, *here* in the free city of Pentos.”

character explain something. If the explaining is rendered in direct discourse, that is, as quoted speech, then the authorial touch can be negligible, since the information is more easily recuperable as simple aural perception (e.g., the Hound's drunken words to Sansa (see page 57 above)). If, on the other hand, the speech is represented in indirect discourse, as part of the narration, the reflector's subjective reactions become marked: the speech event, a paraphrase of the original, is now part of the reflector's internal landscape. It is an interpretation, a reflection, or at least it should rightly be one (since the narration is supposed to embody the reflector's perspective).

The following is an example of just such an extended passage of exposition through indirect discourse. What is remarkable about it is that it reads more like a neutral record, a narrative within a narrative, than subjective perception by a reflector character. The passage involves Jon, the reflector, listening to Samwell Tarly recount his life history and how it was that he ended up in the Night's Watch. Samwell's account runs for about two pages and is clearly demarcated, its beginning and ending explicitly cued to set it off from the surrounding narrative:

After a long while Samwell Tarly began to talk, and Jon Snow listened quietly, and learned how it was that a self-confessed coward found himself on the Wall.

....  
Sam told the tale in a calm, dead voice, as if it were something that had happened to someone else, not to him. And strangely, Jon thought, he did not weep, not even once. When he was done, they sat together and listened to the wind for a time. There was no other sound in all the world. (Martin 267–69)

The opening cue in particular smacks of external focalization. In addition to a subtle flashforward that effectively covers the entire scene ("Jon Snow . . . learned how it was that a self-confessed coward found himself on the Wall"), the opening also includes conspicuously formal denomination ("Samwell Tarly", "Jon Snow"). Such reference reflects neither Jon's obvious familiarity with himself, nor his growing familiarity with Sam. Both the flashforward and the denomination plainly evoke a narrating agency. By

comparison, the ending appears to veer toward internal focalization: the familiarizing denomination (“Sam”, “Jon”) together with the subjectivity markers (“as if it were”, “strangely, Jon thought”) recall Jon as the reflector. But note that even here there is a trace of authorial agency in how the narrative simultaneously closes and summarizes Sam’s story: “Sam told the tale in a calm, dead voice . . . he did not weep, not even once.” Not only does this cue closure, but it also constitutes a retrospective temporal summary that effectively *retells* the scene, with the focus now on qualitative aspects rather than thematic ones. (Indeed, this retelling includes precisely the kind of perceptual information about Sam’s act of narration that the initial rendering lacks.) Together, the beginning and ending collapse the linear flow of story time, accentuating the separation between Sam’s story and the surrounding narrative.

The expository function of the passage is even more apparent in the complete lack of internal focalization in the passage proper: the narration does not mark Sam’s story as filtered through Jon’s consciousness. Apart from one brief direct discourse rendering of Sam’s speech in the middle, the passage eschews any identification of a listening subjectivity. For the most part, Sam’s story reads like this:

Whatever pride his lord father might have felt at Samwell’s birth vanished as the boy grew up plump, soft, and awkward. Sam loved to listen to music and make his own songs, to wear soft velvets, to play in the castle kitchen beside the cooks, drinking in the rich smells as he snatched lemon cakes and blueberry tarts. His passions were books and kittens and dancing, clumsy as he was. But he grew ill at the sight of blood, and wept to see even a chicken slaughtered. A dozen masters-at-arms came and went at Horn Hill, trying to turn Samwell into the knight his father wanted. (Martin 268)

There is nothing here to suggest that Jon is listening to this, that this is his internalized rendering of Sam’s words. Rather, it is as though the narrative simply omits Jon as an interpretative layer, and paraphrases Sam’s story “as is”. This neutral quality stems, in part, from the fact that the narration betrays neither marked empathy nor marked antipathy for Sam’s situation. Which is to say that there are hints of both, but that

neither overshadows the other (e.g., “plump, soft, and awkward” can be construed as negative characterization, while “drinking in the *rich* smells” clearly puts an empathetic spin on Sam’s propensity for culinary delights). That Sam’s story mostly reads as a straightforward biographical summary only enforces this apparent neutrality. If Jon is the listener, then this is only because the opening cue explicitly establishes him as such (“Jon Snow listened” (Martin 267)).

It is actually Sam himself who becomes the listener toward the end: the story climaxes in a longish passage of direct discourse, complete with a scenic context, that presents his father’s fateful ultimatum to him (see Martin 268–69). Sam thus becomes a listener, though not an internal focalizer, *inside* his own story. Such a scenic ending together with the apparently neutral, summative narration nearly turns the entire episode into an actual temporal shift. Even though the beginning and ending cues bracket the scene as Jon-listening-to-Sam, a straining of figural logic is evident. The lack of subjective reflection by Jon shifts the thematic focus on new information: Sam’s story is primarily expository in function. It is designed to flesh out Sam’s character, and to elicit the reader’s sympathy by the matter-of-fact manner it presents his father’s atrocious treatment of him. (It is a testament to the covert narrator’s figural ethics that this treatment is never explicitly judged as atrocious for the reader.)

It bears repeating that exposition in Martin is always embedded in a figural context. No matter how conspicuous the authorial aspect of exposition, an expository passage in Martin is always recuperable as part of a reflector character’s consciousness, even if only just.

Besides explicitly cuing passages as reminiscence or such, if Martin’s narrator suddenly presents information that the reader would not expect the reflector to know, the exposition is typically tagged with a brief explanation that rationalizes the new

information in realistic terms. For instance, Catelyn's knowledge of Moreo's seafaring past is here justified by reference to an earlier discussion: "He'd been plying the narrow sea for thirty years, he'd told her, as oarman, quartermaster, and finally captain of his own trading galleys. The *Storm Dancer* was his fourth ship, and his fastest, a two-masted galley of sixty oars" (Martin 165). The "he'd told her" does little to camouflage the exposition, but it does naturalize it as plausible knowledge for Catelyn to possess.

Finally, since authorial flavor is relative to narrative context, what is overtly authorial in Martin may well be only lightly authorial in Leiber. Unlike Leiber, Martin's narrative never fully breaks into authorial knowledge and reflection. In Martin, authorial exposition is a matter of conspicuously convenient information or the backgrounding of internal focalization, or both. At no point does Martin's narrator actually step in to explain things for the reader in his own voice.

Illicit omissions in internal focalization constitute another maneuver in Martin that puts a strain on the figural narration. This is a dramatic technique that violates figural logic by withholding information that the reflector character is sure to know. In essence, the narrator briefly suspends internal focalization, cutting off the reader's access into the reflector's consciousness, and betraying his own authority in the process. This technique is an offshoot of the more general phenomenon of paralipsis: "saying too little" in the context of the established narrative situation (Jahn N3.3.15.). For example, there is a subtle paralipsis in the following passage which finds Jon explaining to his fellow recruits how it is that they will help Sam survive the training grounds:

"Listen to me," Jon said into the quiet, and he told them how it was going to be. Pyp backed him, as he'd known he would, but when Halder spoke up, it was a pleasant surprise. Grenn was anxious at the first, but Jon knew the words to move him. One by one the rest fell in line. Jon persuaded some, cajoled some, shamed the others, made threats where threats were required. At the end they had all agreed . . . all but Rast. (Martin 270)

Although the surrounding narrative is restricted to Jon's perspective, the narrator here strategically omits the one crucial piece of information that Jon is sure to know as he is the one who spells it out to the others: what the plan is. The narrative simply states that Jon "told them how it was going to be." The narrator violates his own rule of internal focalization by denying access to precisely that piece of scenic information that internal focalization would reveal. The revelation itself is delayed until the narrative returns to the training grounds a few paragraphs later, and the narrator is able to show Jon's plan in action. Providing the pertinent information beforehand would obviously have spoiled the surprise. Hence the shift into what can only be covert external focalization. Note also how the authorial orientation in the above passage is supported by the summative narration on the one hand, and offset by the familiarizing denomination and the lack of a distinct narratorial voice on the other. (Indeed, Martin's narrator does not really have a distinct voice of his own.) Paralipsis is a rare phenomenon in Martin, no doubt due to the strong figural current that runs through the novel.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

As the above analysis shows, Leiber and Martin display markedly different tendencies in their handling of consciousness and narrative perspective. Internal focalization is clearly the rule in Martin, where story space and story time are almost always rendered through a reflector character's subjective perspective, and where the representation of cognition is almost always figurally motivated. There are, of course, moments when the normally covert narrator seems to step in, and external focalization seems to take over, but these are few and far between, and typically discreet. Indeed, such moments are often so unobtrusive that the surrounding internal focalization subsumes them in the reading process, causing the reader to either gloss over them, or interpret them as

internal rather than external focalization. In Martin, perceptual and cognitive focalization clearly coincide with a figural narrative situation.

Leiber, in contrast, presents a more complicated case. To be sure, the framework in the narrative is authorial. This is evident not only in the overall dominance of external focalization and narratorial omniscience, but also in the diversity of approaches to rendering story space, story time, and fictional cognition. In Leiber, focalization on space ranges from panoramic and consecutive to reflectorized and internal; focalization on time runs the gamut from temporal summaries to close identity with a character's subjective experience in time; and focalization on knowledge and reflection spans the entire spectrum from omniscient to reflectorized to figurally restricted. Only an authorial narrator can display such variety. Yet it is precisely this variety, and the substantial amount of figural perspectivism that mark Leiber's novel as an authorial narrative *with distinct figural tendencies*. Leiber's use of reflectorization in particular highlights the authorial narrator's predilection for greater closeness to the characters than what authorial narration necessitates. (This is especially true with Fafhrd and the Mouser whom the narrator treats by turns with obvious sympathy and playful irony.) An authorial narrative situation dominates in Leiber, but the novel is clearly not as strongly entrenched in it as Martin's novel is in a figural narrative situation.

It should be noted that the figural tendencies in Leiber need not automatically violate the authorial framework. Narratorial omniscience, for example, is hardly ever consistently sustained throughout an authorial narrative (Stanzel 126). Instead, the narrator's unrestricted knowledge typically alternates with representations of restricted knowledge attributable to a story-internal consciousness (ibid.). In other words, internal focalization certainly has its place in authorial narratives as well (see also section 1.4. above). Still, there is no denying the substantial figural perspectivism in Leiber.



## **2.5. Afterword: Emotion and Ideology**

Rimmon-Kenan discusses two further aspects of focalization: the emotive component, the other half of the psychological facet, and the ideological facet. In terms of emotive orientation, external focalization yields objective or uninvolved narration, whereas internal focalization involves subjectively colored, involved narration (Rimmon-Kenan 81). The ideological facet concerns a standard of norms against which characters, events and objects in the narrative are evaluated (Rimmon-Kenan 82–83). The ideological opposition between external and internal focalization manifests as the difference between a single dominant narrator perspective on the one hand, and a plurality of autonomous character perspectives on the other (Rimmon-Kenan 83).

As I have already stated, I will not analyze emotive and ideological focalization in Leiber and Martin, because I do not believe that such an analysis would reveal anything new about the overarching narrative patterns at work in the two texts. In Martin, there is no overt narrator persona, and hence no superordinate narrator perspective. Since almost everything is filtered through reflector characters, the narration is typically colored by the current reflector's subjectivity. Furthermore, the ideological landscape in Martin emerges as a complex patchwork of evenly aligned character positions, all of which are only provisionally reliable. In short, focalization in Martin is dominantly and consistently internal.

Leiber's text, on the other hand, has an authorial narrator, and thus a single dominant perspective to which all others are technically subordinate. Leiber's narrator is not absolute in his power, of course, and habitually yields the floor to his characters and their private concerns: narratorial objectivity alternates with involved, story-internal subjectivity. The preceding text extracts already exemplify this. And while the authorial narrator is often quite free with his evaluations, the characters are never reduced to his

ideological mouthpieces, and only rarely are they explicitly judged as either good or bad. For an authorial agent, Leiber's narrator makes quite a few figurally oriented allowances.

### 3. FIGURAL LANGUAGE AND VOICE

#### 3.1. The Three Techniques

Dorrit Cohn distinguishes between three basic modes or techniques for representing figural consciousness in third person narration: psycho-narration, quoted monologue, and narrated monologue (11–14). I will call these techniques *psychonarration*, *interior monologue*, and *free indirect discourse*, respectively.<sup>15</sup> The first, psychonarration, comprises “the narrator’s discourse about a character’s consciousness” (Cohn 14). In psychonarration, in other words, the narrator reports or analyzes what is going on inside the character’s mind. It is the most indirect and narratorial of the three techniques, and also the most privileged in its psychological access, since it need not be restrained by the character’s self-awareness (see Cohn 46, 56–57). However, psychonarration can be used covertly as well as overtly. At the latter end, we have authorially oriented or “dissonant” psychonarration, which exploits “the narrator’s superior knowledge of the character’s inner life and his superior ability to present it and assess it” (Cohn 29). This type of psychonarration is characterized by authorial statements in gnomic present tense, speculative or explanatory commentary on the character’s consciousness, and/or prominent analytical or conceptual terms that set the narrator’s language apart from the character’s (Cohn 28–29, 31). By comparison, “consonant psychonarration” eschews all the above signs of authorial agency and privilege (Cohn 31). It also avoids reportorial indirection, replaces abstract statements with subjectively charged metaphors, and may

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<sup>15</sup> I substitute *interior monologue* for *quoted monologue* and *free indirect discourse* for *narrated monologue* as these seem to be the most common terms for the two techniques. They may not be the most descriptive terms for the phenomena in question, but they should be the most accessible because of their popular usage. Psychonarration, as the most critically neglected technique, has no fixed name, and I have therefore decided to use Cohn’s original coinage (see Cohn 11–12; Palmer 30–31). However, I have dropped the hyphen as I find it both ungainly and unnecessary.

blend the character's thoughts and feelings with his or her sensory experience (Cohn 31, see 49). In figural narration, psychonarration can even approach free indirect discourse by adopting figural vocabulary (Cohn 32–33, 138; Fludernik, *Fictions* 304).

Interior monologue represents “a character's mental discourse” (Cohn 14). That is, it presents the character's thoughts as directly quoted inner speech. It is the most direct consciousness technique, but also the most restricted in its psychological access: since it purports to render the contents of a figural mind verbatim, it is necessarily limited to the verbal and most conscious stratum of that mind (Cohn 76–77, 139–40). Furthermore, interior monologue is crucially dependent on narrative context for its effect (Cohn 66, 76). In authorial narration, when combined with authorial glosses or dissonant psychonarration, interior monologues tend to increase the disparity between narrator and character, often through irony (Cohn 66–68, 76). Explicit quotation signals and attributive tags also draw attention to a narrating agency (Cohn 61, 68, 76). In contrast, interior monologues are at their most unobtrusive in figural contexts where the narrator omits all signs of quotation, avoids mixing the monologues with psychonarration, allows figural language to color the narration, and generally adheres closely to figural subjectivity (Cohn 71, 76). In Cohn's terms, this is an opposition between “ironically quoted” interior monologue and “unsigned” interior monologue (139).

Free indirect discourse, finally, represents “a character's mental discourse in the guise of the narrator's discourse” (Cohn 14).<sup>16</sup> More specifically, free indirect discourse renders the character's thoughts and feelings in his or her own idiom, but it does this

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<sup>16</sup> Even though Cohn defines free indirect discourse in terms of a transformation from an original inner speech act, that is, from interior monologue, the technique need not be conceived as implying such an act. Fludernik, for example, rejects this transformational approach, arguing instead that free indirect discourse is a fundamentally non-mimetic technique (*Fictions* 75, 408, 453). Even Cohn allows that free indirect discourse can be ambiguous as to whether it represents actual words running through a character's mind, or more nonverbal activity (103, see 106–07; see also Fludernik, *Fictions* 78).

through third person narration (Cohn 100). The words belong to the narrator, but the voice that sounds through them belongs to the character. Free indirect discourse therefore falls somewhere between interior monologue and psychonarration in meaning and function (Cohn 105). By casting the character's "subjective" language into the narrator's "objective" grammar, it ostensibly merges the two voices of character and narrator, combining "the immediacy of quotation and the mediacy of narration" (Cohn 105–06). Like psychonarration and interior monologue, free indirect discourse runs the gamut between authorial and figural usage. Authorial narrators often use the technique together with authorial commentary to introduce an ironic gap between themselves and the characters whose minds they represent (Cohn 118–20). Rather than an authentic or serious representation, the result is a kind of "mock-impersonation" of figural subjectivity (Cohn 119, see 120). While Cohn restricts authorial free indirect discourse to ironic passages, I would add that free indirect discourse can take on an authorial tonality in other contexts as well: collective focalization, for example, can be rendered in free indirect discourse to produce reflectorization. Figurally oriented free indirect discourse, on the other hand, is serious and empathic (Cohn 122, 139). That is, it embraces the character's voice so completely that the narrator's voice is for all intents and purposes effaced. Such empathic free indirect discourse is frequently combined with consonant psychonarration (Cohn 33, 134, 137; see Fludernik, *Fictions* 321).

As this short introduction suggests, there is no simple correlation between narrative situations and consciousness techniques (see Cohn 138; Fludernik, *Fictions* 309). All three techniques occur in both authorial and figural contexts. Psychonarration, for example, remains an important and common technique in figural narratives, despite popular belief (see Cohn 12, 38, 46; Fludernik, *Fictions* 77; Palmer 30–31). Moreover, these techniques obviously do not occur by themselves in actual texts, but "mix and

match in various ways” (Cohn 138; see Fludernik, *Fictions* 309, 319). Still, there are typical patterns of usage. It is generally acknowledged that there is a marked affinity between authorial narration and psychonarration on the one hand, and between figural narration and free indirect discourse on the other (Cohn 111, 138; Fludernik, *Fictions* 87; Stanzel 188, 197–98). Interior monologue is more neutral with regard to narrative situation: it betrays no pronounced affinity for either type of narration, but is certainly employed in both (see Cohn 66, 71, 138–39).

In the following analysis, my aim is to more closely chart the evocation of figural subjectivity in Leiber and Martin, to examine in what ways and to what extent the two narratives capture and incorporate characters’ voices. In addition to the three techniques, I also briefly discuss narrative discourse style.

### **3.2. Psychonarration**

Psychonarration is clearly the preferred technique for rendering characters’ minds in *The Swords of Lankhmar*. It typically takes the form of one or two short sentences that provide an internal motivation or context for external action, but there are also longer passages that focalize a character’s thoughts and emotions in greater detail. Moreover, as might be expected in Leiber, its usage oscillates between the authorial and the figural, that is, between dissonance and consonance with the represented mind.

In the dissonant passages, the disparity between character and narrator is usually marked by authorial commentary that relies on the narrator’s superior knowledge or assessment, or both. Consider, for example, the following passage which finds the Mouser (magically reduced to rat size for nine hours) in the rat kingdom below Lankhmar, reflecting on his next course of action:

Now, the Mouser had no intention of staying anything like nine hours in the rat-world. On the other hand, he didn't exactly want to escape at once. Dodging around in Lankhmar like a nimbly animate gray doll for half a night didn't appeal to him . . . Besides, his mind was already afire with schemes to assassinate the rats' king, if they had one, or foil their obvious project of conquest in some even more spectacular fashion on their home ground. He felt a peculiarly great self-confidence and had not realized yet that it was because he was fully as tall as the taller rats around, as tall as Fafhrd, relatively, and no longer the smallish man he had been all his life. (Leiber, *Swords* 151)

This is an extended passage of psychonarration where each sentence conveys something about the Mouser's consciousness. Although the syntax is unmistakably reportorial, the passage begins in a relatively nondescript manner: there is nothing especially authorial about the psychonarration in the first three sentences ("had no intention", "didn't exactly want", "didn't appeal to him"). In fact, the emphatic "*anything like* nine hours" and "didn't *exactly* want" could well echo the Mouser's subjectivity. Furthermore, while the hyperbolic "his mind was already afire" in the fourth sentence seems to border on authorial description, the clause "if they had one" anchors the narrative perspective to the Mouser's subjective knowledge. The last sentence, however, clearly spills over into dissonant psychonarration by explicitly reporting something the Mouser is unaware of, namely the reason for his newly found self-confidence ("*had not realized yet* that it was because he was fully as tall as the taller rats around"). Reporting something a character does not know or think is, of course, an inherently authorial maneuver that cannot but draw attention to a disparity between character and narrator (see page 46 above).

Leiber's narrator also employs extended passages of psychonarration that remain relatively consonant with the focalized consciousness. The Mouser's private misgivings about making a possibly inappropriate proposal to Fafhrd concerning Hisvet, whom the Mouser is aching to bed, are a case in point:

The Mouser studied Fafhrd, wondering if it were politic to make a certain proposal he had in mind. He was not quite certain of the full nature of Fafhrd's feelings toward Hisvet. He knew the Northerner was a goatish man enough and had yesterday seemed quite obsessed with the love-making they'd missed in Lankhmar, yet he also knew that his comrade had a variable romantic streak that was sometimes thin as a thread yet sometimes grew into a silken ribbon leagues wide in which armies might stumble and be lost.

On the afterdeck Slinoor was now conferring most earnestly with the cook, presumably (the Mouser decided) about Hisvet's (and his own and Fafhrd's) dinner. The thought of Slinoor having to go to so much trouble about the pleasures of three persons who today had thoroughly thwarted him made the Mouser grin and somehow also nerved him to take the uncertain step he'd been contemplating.

'Fafhrd,' he whispered, 'I'll dice you for Hisvet's favors.' (Leiber, *Swords* 48)

Two things stand out in this passage. On the one hand, only the Mouser's consciousness is focalized from within. How Fafhrd will react to the Mouser's proposal, and what Slinoor is discussing with the cook remain speculative, since the narrative perspective is restricted to the Mouser's cognitive and sensory horizon (i.e., he cannot read Fafhrd's mind any more than he can hear Slinoor's words). Furthermore, the psychonarration does not show any obvious signs of dissonance: no authorial glosses betray the narrator's cognitive privilege, nor does the narrative employ markedly analytical or conceptual vocabulary. Instead, the Mouser's thoughts are rendered in a straightforward manner ("wondering if it were politic to make a certain proposal", "He was not quite certain", "He knew the Northerner was a goatish man", "he also knew that his comrade had a variable romantic streak", "the Mouser decided", "The thought . . . nerved him to take the uncertain step he'd been contemplating").

On the other hand, there is nothing prominently subjective about the passage either. It may be restricted to the Mouser's perspective, but it does not evoke his voice in any tangible sense. One reason for this is that the language does not incorporate the Mouser's idiolect. In fact, apart from the phrase "a goatish man enough" which can be read as the Mouser's evaluation of Fafhrd, and the temporal deictic "now" which locates the focalization in story time, the language does not embrace the Mouser's subjectivity at all (ibid.). As a result, the reportorial quality of the psychonarration (e.g., "he knew that") is more apparent than it would otherwise be. There is also a hint of authorial maneuvering in the way the narrative delays revealing what the Mouser has in mind, referring to the proposal simply as "a certain proposal" and "the uncertain step" (ibid.).



The paralipsis pays off in the Mouser's whisper which ends the passage on a surprising and comic note, but it also draws attention to the fact that there is a narrating agency behind the Mouser's internal perspective. In sum, while the above passage is technically internally focalized, and the psychonarration consonant, the figural effect is neutralized.

By and large, markedly dissonant or consonant passages of psychonarration are rare in Leiber. The most typical instantiations are short inserts that fall somewhere between authorial and figural in their orientation. What is more, they often appear as adjuncts to external action, such as Fafhrd's trepidation about an invisible army as he makes his way through the mysteriously empty streets of Lankhmar:

Whore Street, which was even more twisty than Cheap Street, looked tenantless too, but he was hardly half a block beyond it when he heard the tramp of boots and the clink of armor behind him. Ducking into the narrow shadows, he watched a double squad of guardsmen cross hurriedly through the moonlight, going south on Whore Street in the direction of the South Barracks. They were crowded close together, watched every way, and carried their weapons at the ready, despite the apparent absence of foe. This seemed to confirm Fafhrd's notion of an army of invisibles. Feeling more spooked than ever, he continued rapidly on his way. (Leiber, *Swords* 194)

The focus here is on Fafhrd's journey through the streets and the wary group of soldiers passing him in a hurry. Psychonarration caps the action by briefly recording its internal effects on Fafhrd's consciousness ("seemed to confirm Fafhrd's notion", "Feeling more spooked than ever"). While this adds to Fafhrd's character by rendering his growing fear of the supernatural, the psychonarration is not constitutive of the passage as such. More to the point, it is entirely neutral in tone: it is neither markedly dissonant nor markedly consonant in itself. If the passage as a whole is read as externally focalized, then the psychonarration will most likely take on a dissonant cast. If, instead, the passage is interpreted as internally focalized, the psychonarration will appear consonant. (Apart from "looked tenantless" and "the tramp of boots and the clink of armor" in the first sentence, which suggest subjective perception, the passage does not readily cue either type of focalization. However, since the surrounding narrative closely observes Fafhrd's

perspective, and eschews authorial intrusions, the reader will most likely interpret the above passage as internally focalized.)

In general, narrative context is crucial to the psychonarration in Leiber. Because the technique typically punctuates the narrative in the form of short inserts, and since it is usually neutral rather than overtly dissonant or consonant, context becomes a decisive factor in orienting the reader. Given that external focalization is the rule in Leiber, psychonarration typically acquires an authorial feel simply by virtue of the surrounding narrative.

It is somewhat surprising that psychonarration is the preferred consciousness technique in *A Game of Thrones* as well. Figural narratives should, after all, favor free indirect discourse for representing characters' minds. The psychonarration in Martin, however, is almost exclusively consonant, often pronouncedly so. It is also much more common than in Leiber, and frequently extends to longer passages that are not subordinate to external action. The reflector characters habitually lose themselves in their private thoughts and memories, with the internal scene completely eclipsing the external one. For example, psychonarration is the driving force behind the following passage which focuses at length on Jon's initial loneliness as a Sworn Brother of the Night's Watch:

If he must be alone, he would make solitude his armor. Castle Black had no godswood, only a small sept and a drunken septon, but Jon could not find it in him to pray to any gods, old or new. If they were real, he thought, they were as cruel and implacable as winter.

He missed his true brothers: little Rickon, bright eyes shining as he begged for a sweet; Robb, his rival and best friend and constant companion; Bran, stubborn and curious, always wanting to follow and join in whatever Jon and Robb were doing. He missed the girls too, even Sansa, who never called him anything but "my half brother" since she was old enough to understand what *bastard* meant. And Arya . . . he missed her even more than Robb, skinny little thing that she was, all scraped knees and tangled hair and torn clothes, so fierce and willful. Arya never seemed to fit, no more than he had . . . yet she could always make Jon smile. He would give anything to be with her now, to muss up her hair once more and watch her make a face, to hear her finish a sentence with him. (Martin 179)

The passage mixes reflection and memory to great effect, resulting in an intimate and personal depiction of Jon's almost bitter longing for the company of his siblings. The passage starts off on a figural note with a free indirect discourse (FID) rendering of Jon's stubborn conviction to armor himself in solitude. The second sentence ends in simple psychonarration on Jon's relationship with the gods – a theme that is briefly elaborated on in the third sentence through FID tagged with parenthetical psychonarration ("he thought"). The heart of the passage is the second paragraph where psychonarration is marked by the subtle yet effective repetition of the "He missed . . ." construction. More important than the verbal incipits themselves are the subjective memories they cue: vivid character snapshots, each appropriate to Jon's personal relationship with the brother or sister in question. The Arya segment, in particular, evokes Jon's emotive subjectivity in a tangible way (note especially the empathic "skinny little thing that she was, all scraped knees and tangled hair and torn clothes, so fierce and willful" that encapsulates Jon's brotherly affection for his sister). By introducing reflective pauses, the two ellipses further reinforce the impression that the narration is patterned after Jon's flow of consciousness. Finally, the ending fuses psychonarration and FID in an interesting fashion: the clause "He would give anything to be with her now" is arguably a statement about Jon's consciousness, and therefore psychonarration, yet it feels mimetic rather than reportorial. Further, the present tense and the temporal deictic ("He would give . . . now") clearly echo Jon's voice in the now of story time (were it not for the third person reference, the sentence could easily pass as interior monologue). All in all, the passage reads as an empathic representation of Jon's thoughts. His voice may not be pronounced throughout, but nor is there any hint of a narrator's voice that might come into conflict with his.

The mixing of psychonarration and FID is very common in Martin. In fact, psychonarration in the novel frequently adopts figural vocabulary or blends with FID to such an extent that it becomes difficult to separate the two techniques. Here is a typical example from the opening of one of Sansa's chapters:

Sansa already looked her best. She had brushed out her long auburn hair until it shone, and picked her nicest blue silks. She had been looking forward to today for more than a week. It was a great honor to ride with the queen, and besides, Prince Joffrey might be there. Her betrothed. Just thinking it made her feel a strange fluttering inside, even though they were not to marry for years and years. Sansa did not really *know* Joffrey yet, but she was already in love with him. He was all she ever dreamt her prince should be, tall and handsome and strong, with hair like gold. She treasured every chance to spend time with him, few as they were. The only thing that scared her about today was Arya. Arya had a way of ruining everything. You never knew what she would do. (Martin 140)

Sansa's internal focalization consists almost entirely of consonant psychonarration and empathic FID. (The first two sentences are the only ones that lack both, although there is already a hint of figural subjectivity in the evaluative "her *nicest* blue silks".) The third sentence cues focalization from within by retrospective psychonarration ("She had been looking forward to today"), which quickly shifts into pure FID in the fourth sentence (note especially the emphatic "and besides" which betrays the real reason for Sansa's excitement). The fifth, verbless sentence caps the FID by redefining Joffrey in terms of what he means to Sansa. The narration switches back to psychonarration in the sixth sentence ("thinking it made her feel a strange fluttering inside"), yet the expressive elements "Just" and "for years and years" clearly approach FID. The next two sentences are similar in that they too are psychonarration, reporting on Sansa's mind through verbs of consciousness, yet include subjectivity markers that color the narration with Sansa's idiolect: the nearly spoken "*know*", the familiarizing denomination in "*her* prince", and the quixotic "tall and handsome and strong, with hair like gold" all echo Sansa's girlish infatuation with Joffrey (as does the implicitly ironic contrast between her not knowing him yet nonetheless being "already in love with him"). The ninth sentence continues the

psychonarration with the most expressive predicate verb in the passage (“She *treasured* every chance”) and ends in what seems to be yet another empathic FID extension (“few as they were”). The passage is concluded by discreet psychonarration (“The only thing that scared her”) followed by two sentences in pure FID that together voice Sansa’s anxiety about Arya. As a whole, the passage vividly captures Sansa’s adolescent naivety about her gallant prince: the voice that sounds through the text is clearly Sansa’s.

This interplay between psychonarration and FID supports Cohn’s argument that in a figural context the two techniques tend to blend in various ways, with psychonarration typically adopting figural vocabulary (137–39; see section 3.1. above). However, the interplay in the above passage could arguably be even more complete. The narrative could, for example, have incorporated Sansa’s idiolect much more forcefully. Nevertheless, I maintain that in the reading process the two techniques, as they are used in the passage, readily fuse into a smooth and continuous evocation of Sansa’s voice.

Dissonant psychonarration is virtually nonexistent in Martin. In fact, one can really only talk about potential dissonance, and even then it is rarely psychonarration per se that causes it. For instance, contrast the psychonarration and the denomination in this chapter opening: “There were times—not many, but a few—when Jon Snow was glad he was a bastard. As he filled his wine cup once more from a passing flagon, it struck him that this might be one of them” (Martin 49). The psychonarration itself shows no obvious signs of dissonance. It does not entail superior knowledge on the narrator’s part, nor in any way evaluate or explain Jon’s consciousness. If anything, the emphatic “not many, but a few” echoes Jon’s thoughts. The only thing that suggests dissonance between character and narrator is the formal “Jon Snow” which does not sound like something Jon would call himself. However, as this is the first and only occurrence of such naming in the entire chapter, the dissonance remains a momentary

effect only. (The formal naming can here be explained as an introductory gesture prompted by the fact that this is the first chapter to feature Jon as a reflector character.)

There are also the occasional narratorial “slippages” that may evoke momentary dissonance (or just disorientation). The following passage comes from the middle of a heavily figural section in a Catelyn chapter: “Catelyn tensed at the mention of the name. Ned felt the anger in her, and pulled away” (Martin 65). Does the narrative suddenly switch to Ned’s consciousness via psychonarration, or is the second sentence merely Catelyn’s implied observation? Formally, the second sentence seems to focalize Ned’s mind from within. There is nothing provisional or subjective about the sentence that suggests it should be attributed to Catelyn. If this is a shift in focalization, then the passage breaks with the novel’s figural logic and betrays an authorial agency. However, contextually the sentence is easily recuperable as Catelyn’s perception. Because the surrounding narrative is internally focalized through Catelyn’s perspective, there is no reason not to gloss over the “slippage” and read the sentence as Catelyn’s (accurate) interpretation of Ned’s behavior. It needs to be stressed that such slippages are scarce in the novel, much more scarce than formal denomination, for example.

In Martin, psychonarration clearly correlates with a figural narrative situation: its use is dominantly and often strongly consonant, and it frequently mixes with empathic free indirect discourse. That psychonarration is the preferred consciousness technique does not change the fact that the narrative is a figural one. However, it does suggest that the novel is not as pronouncedly figural as figural narratives can be. Leiber’s use of psychonarration, in contrast, corresponds to neither authorial nor figural narration in any marked way. The range of uses certainly entails an authorial narrator, yet it is ultimately the narrative context rather than the psychonarration as such that sets the tone. Still, the fact that psychonarration in Leiber normally takes the form of short, neutrally colored

passages that are subordinate to external action suggests that Leiber's narrator is not as interested in portraying his characters' inner worlds as, for example, Martin's narrator.

### 3.3. Interior Monologue

Interior monologues are virtually nonexistent in Leiber. I have found only four short passages in the entire novel that can be read as interior monologues, and only the last two are unequivocally inner speech (see Leiber, *Swords* 67, 140, 216, 217). The narrator does not even observe consistent orthographical markings for the monologues (e.g., italics alternate with quotation marks). The technique is clearly a negligible feature in Leiber, and therefore requires no further consideration.

While not quite nonexistent, interior monologues are not very common in Martin either. Still, they are used consistently throughout the novel, scarce as they may be. The monologues are always rendered in italics and usually tagged with psychonarration. The most typical interior monologues are short, solitary clauses or sentences: "Butterflies fluttered nervously in Sansa's stomach. *I shouldn't be afraid*, she told herself. *I have nothing to be afraid of, it will all come out well, Joff loves me and the queen does too, she said so*" (Martin 619). The inclusion and exclusion of attributive tags (e.g., "she told herself") does not seem to follow any particular pattern. And given that the interior monologues are already explicitly marked, one wonders why include tags in the first place. After all, they contain little or no new information as they typically merely reiterate what is already obvious (e.g., that Sansa is thinking to herself). The tags do occasionally include adverbial modifiers, more evocative verbs, or other such devices that further define the monologic acts, but such instances are few and far between. The tags rarely do more than anchor the monologues to the third person narration. That is, they typically serve a purely incantatory purpose rather than a functional or thematic

one (cf. Cohn 64–65). However, since a tag inescapably draws attention to the fact that there is someone quoting the character's thoughts, the effect is to reduce the intimacy gained via the interior monologue. The above passage would work fine without the "she told herself" clause. Monologues that lack tags certainly do not need them: "His smile emboldened her, made her feel beautiful and strong. *He does love me, he does.* Sansa lifted her head and walked toward him, not too slow and not too fast. She must not let them see how nervous she was" (Martin 625). Here the interior monologue is allowed to flow uninterrupted. A tag clause, no matter its position, would only distract from the empathic immediacy the monologue evokes.

Interior monologues in Martin never really deviate from clear, communicative English. The monologues may be colloquial in style and diction, and they may not even form complete clauses or sentences by themselves, but they are always easily readable. The reader has no more trouble with the monologues than s/he has with the narrator's third person discourse. This legibility of monologic language, together with the explicit quotation signals (i.e., italics) and frequent tag clauses, marks Martin's use of the technique as rather conservative. For comparison, the following extract from *Ulysses* shows what James Joyce does with interior monologue. Leopold Bloom is sitting in a funeral carriage, looking out onto the street:

He passed an arm through the armstrap and looked seriously from the open carriage window at the lowered blinds of the avenue. One dragged aside: an old woman peeping. Nose whiteflattened against the pane. Thanking her stars she was passed over. Extraordinary the interest they take in a corpse. Glad to see us go we give them such trouble coming. Job seems to suit them. Huggermugger in corners. Slop about in slipperslappers for fear he'd wake. Then getting it ready. Laying it out. (Joyce 84)

Here there are neither orthographic signals nor tag clauses to separate the interior monologue from its third person context (cf. Cohn 62). The narration simply flows into interior monologue as the narrator quietly yields his voice to the character. Moreover,



the monologic language clearly breaks with formal grammar: words are ellipted and the syntax broken in order to give the sentences a more abrupt and immediate feel. There is also the highly idiomatic and opaque vocabulary: “whiteflattened”, “Huggermugger”, “slipperslappers” (cf. Cohn 96–97). As a result, Joyce’s interior monologue is markedly consonant, allowing a more ready and immediate access into figural thoughts than the interior monologues in Martin. The only features that Martin and Joyce seem to have in common are the first person reference and present tense, the two universals of interior monologue (Cohn 62–63). Then again, Joyce is experimental to the extreme. Like Martin, most modern novelists prefer easy legibility over stylistic experimentation (Cohn 89).

In Martin, interior monologues are used mainly for effect. Unlike free indirect discourse and psychonarration, interior monologues in the novel never extend to longer, independent passages, and are seldom important in themselves. The following excerpt shows Sansa remembering her father’s beheading. I quote at length to exemplify not only the typical use of interior monologues in Martin, but also their characteristic ratio in the text:

Sometimes her sleep was leaden and dreamless, and she woke from it more tired than when she had closed her eyes. Yet those were the best times, for when she dreamed, she dreamed of Father. Waking or sleeping, she saw him, saw the gold cloaks fling him down, saw Ser Ilyn striding forward, unsheathing Ice from the scabbard on his back, saw the moment . . . the moment when . . . she had wanted to look away, she had *wanted* to, her legs had gone out from under her and she had fallen to her knees, yet somehow she could not turn her head, and all the people were screaming and shouting, and her prince had smiled at her, he’d *smiled* and she’d felt safe, but only for a heartbeat, until he said those words, and her father’s legs . . . that was what she remembered, his legs, the way they’d *jerked* when Ser Ilyn . . . when the sword . . .

*Perhaps I will die too*, she told herself, and the thought did not seem so terrible to her. If she flung herself from the window, she could put an end to her suffering, and in the years to come the singers would write songs of her grief. Her body would lie on the stones below, broken and innocent, shaming all those who had betrayed her. Sansa went so far as to cross the bedchamber and throw open the shutters . . . but then her courage left her, and she ran back to her bed, sobbing. (Martin 741–42)

The first paragraph is mostly one long breathless FID sentence that empathically recalls the beheading through Sansa's perspective (note the subtle repetitions, the ellipses, and especially the emphatically marked verbs that almost evoke inner speech). The short interior monologue that begins the second paragraph essentially serves as a climax for the FID that precedes it. It is a sudden, dramatic interruption that explicitly names the one thing that the FID refuses to: death. But rather than naming her father's death, it evasively shifts the focus to Sansa, to her death, cuing the reflection that takes up most of the second paragraph. The monologue obviously has a structural purpose in bridging together the two paragraphs, yet it could easily be replaced by third person narration, namely FID (e.g., "Perhaps she would die too. The thought did not seem so terrible. If she flung herself . . ."). But what is irreplaceable is the intimate and dramatic note the monologue provides by directly evoking Sansa's own silent words. The fact that it is such a short note makes it all the more striking.

The passage also shows how interior monologues are most effective when combined with empathic FID. The first paragraph sets up Sansa's subjectivity in a pronounced manner, which the monologue then briefly accentuates. Since the narrative is already strongly immersed in Sansa's consciousness, the monologue, despite being overtly marked, does not noticeably depart from the narrative flow. It may be a dramatic note, yet it smoothly continues the internal focalization. The remainder of the second paragraph does not capture Sansa's voice quite as strongly as the first paragraph, but there is no mistaking the characteristic romantic naivety that colors the narration: "she could put an end to her suffering . . . singers would write songs of her grief . . . broken and innocent, shaming all those who had betrayed her" (ibid.). The redundant tag ("she told herself") and the sudden shift in naming in the last sentence ("Sansa" instead of a

simple “she”) arguably undermine the close internal focalization to a certain extent (ibid.). The narrative perspective, however, remains Sansa’s.

This kind of mixing of empathic FID and interior monologue is not especially common in the novel. In fact, no one combination of interior monologue and narrative context stands out as more common than another. This is likely due to the sporadic use of interior monologues, and the fact that they are used primarily for effect (i.e., there is no need for consistency across monologues).

Interior monologues in Martin seem to belong somewhere between authorial and figural in their orientation. On the one hand, there are no unsigned interior monologues. Indeed, the monologues are typically doubly signaled as they are always in italics, and nearly always tagged with incantatory clauses. On the other hand, the covert narrator does not indulge in authorial glosses that might result in a disparity between himself and a character. The monologues may draw attention to a narrating agency by virtue of how they are marked, yet their narrative context rarely does so, since internal focalization is the rule in the novel. The more strongly figural the narration, the less overt the monologic signals are. However, whether the monologues gravitate toward dissonance or consonance is ultimately a moot point. The fact that the most typical instantiations are short, solitary passages; that the monologues are primarily employed for dramatic emphasis; and that their use is relatively infrequent, mark the interior monologue as a minor consciousness technique in Martin. It is not a negligible narrative feature, since it is used consistently throughout the novel, but neither is it a defining one.

### 3.4. Free Indirect Discourse

Free indirect discourse is not as common in Leiber as psychonarration, yet it is still solidly represented, making it a relevant narrative element. It is usually preceded or surrounded by psychonarration, and, interestingly enough, it is almost always empathic (or at least it seems to be). The scene with Fafhrd and the furry calf, parts of which were analyzed in section 2.2.1. above, contains the longest and most empathic FID sequence in the novel. Running at two pages, the scene is also Leiber's longest continuous passage of internal focalization. Here is a further quote from that scene:

Fafhrd was snug abed but feeling somewhat constricted – clearly he had not taken off his boots or any other of his clothing or even unbelted his short-ax, the blade of which, fortunately covered by its thick leather sheath, stuck into his side. Yet he was also filled with a sense of glorious achievement – why, he wasn't yet sure, but it was a grand feeling.

[. . .]

While under his downy thick pillows— Ah, there was the explanation for his ever-mounting sense of glory! Late last night he had cleaned them all out of every golden Lankhmarian rilk, every golden Kvarch Nar gront, every golden coin from the Eastern Lands, Quarmall, or elsewhere! Yes, he remembered it well now: he had taken them all – and at the simple game of sixes and seven, where the banker wins if he matches the number of coins the player holds in his fist; those Eight-City fools didn't realize they tried to make their fists big when they held six golden coins and tightened them when they held seven. Yes, he had turned all their pockets and pouches inside out – and at the end he had crazily matched a quarter of his winnings against an oddly engraved slim tin whistle supposed to have magical properties . . . and won that too! And then saluted them all and reeled off happily, well-ballasted by gold like a treasure galleon, to bed and Hrenlet. Had he had Hrenlet? He wasn't sure. (Leiber, *Swords* 74–75)

The opening paragraph sets up the scene inside Fafhrd's mind through a mix of narrated perception, psychonarration, and subtle free indirect discourse. Although the paragraph is dominated by psychonarration, the narrative language already includes subjectivity markers that evoke Fafhrd's voice ("clearly", "even", "fortunately", "glorious", "why", "grand"). The second paragraph, in turn, reads as one long FID passage that recalls Fafhrd's success at the gaming table. Fafhrd's voice is most pronounced in the three exclamatory sentences, and in the lone interrogative one near the end. (The long third sentence could well have included an exclamation point.) Even the two short instances of psychonarration feel monologic rather than reportorial; the first one because it is

colored by Fafhrd's language ("Yes, he remembered it well *now*"), and the second one because it employs a simple copula instead of an actual verb of cognition ("He *wasn't* sure"). The paragraph also incorporates further FID markers that anchor the narration to Fafhrd's subjectivity: the spatial deictic "there", the evaluative "fools" and "crazily", a second emphatic "Yes", and the provisional "supposed to have magical properties". There is even the sudden "them all" which posits a familiarity that the reader does not share with Fafhrd (i.e., this is the first reference to the other players, and hence new information to the reader). All in all, Fafhrd's subjectivity sounds through strongly and vocally.

There are only a few authorial FID passages in Leiber, and most of them seem to target Glipekrio Kistomercus, Lankhmar's comically pathetic overlord. For instance, consider the narrative voice in this passage which begins with Glipekrio's reflections, and then moves to another location to focalize on Reetha and Samanda:

He had seen with his own eyes Hisvin slay rats with his spell – while on his own part he had arranged for all soldiers and police to be in the South Barracks at midnight listening to that tiresome Olegnya Mingolsbane. He had done his part, he told himself; Hisvin would do his; and at midnight his troubles and vexations would be done.

But it was such a long time until midnight! Once more boredom engulfed the black-togaed, purple-pansy-coroneted, beanpole monarch, and he began to think wistfully of whips and Reetha. Beyond all other men, he mused, an overlord, burdened by administration and ceremonies, had no time for even the most homely hobbies and innocent diversions.

Reetha's questioners, meanwhile, gave up for the day and left her in Samanda's charge, who from time to time described gloatingly to the girl the various all-out thrashings and other torments the palace mistress would visit on her as soon as her namby-pamby inquisitors were through with her. (Leiber, *Swords* 162)

The first paragraph readily reads as internal focalization. Glipekrio's subjectivity may not be especially pronounced in it, yet the subtle "*that tiresome* Olegnya Mingolsbane" clearly voices not only Glipekrio's private evaluation of Olegnya ("tiresome") but also his familiarity with him ("that"). Furthermore, the second sentence is FID instantiated by parenthetical psychonarration (see Fludernik, *Fictions* 285; Jahn N8.6.). The second paragraph continues the FID in a much more pronounced manner in Glipekrio's almost

childish exclamation of frustration. However, the opening clause of the following sentence puts an abrupt stop to the internal focalization. First, the vivid image of the thin and tall Glipkerio wearing his black toga and floral wreath implies external visual focalization (“the black-togaed, purple-pansy-coroneted, beanpole monarch”). Second, the image is a patently negative judgment of him: “purple-pansy” suggests that he is an effeminate weakling while “beanpole” just makes him comic. This is hardly Glipkerio’s self-evaluation as he tends to hold a very conceited view of himself (e.g., “the most homely hobbies and innocent diversions” include watching Samanda whip the palace slaves). Lastly, the formal name (“monarch”) and its densely descriptive premodifier necessarily draw attention to the narrator who saw fit to use them. The opening clause is thus an overtly authorial maneuver that potentially casts the entire passage as externally focalized. The authorial feel is augmented by the sudden shift in focalization in the third paragraph, and the durative-summative narration which opens the new scene from an external perspective (“who from time to time described gloatingly to the girl the various all-out thrashings and other torments”).

In Leiber, empathic collective focalization also produces the occasional passage of authorial FID. Fafhrd, the Mouser, and Slinoor are here staring at another ship: “Slinoor nodded and pointed toward the cutter. It was possible dimly to see tiny dark forms – rats surely! – climbing over its side from out of the water” (Leiber, *Swords* 29). The second sentence represents impaired spatial perception: the implied observer can only “dimly” see “dark forms” swarming the ship. This appears to be internal focalization. That direct reference to the observer is omitted further enforces the story-internal quality (i.e., it is implicit that the sentence originates in the observer’s consciousness). However, no internal focalizer is established for this scene. Since heterodiegetic narrators can only focalize from an external position, it must be assumed that the sentence constitutes

collective focalization through Fafhrd, the Mouser, Slinoor, and anyone else present at the scene. The provisional, story-internal quality of the perception, accentuated by the FID exclamation (“rats surely!”), mark the sentence as empathic collective focalization, that is, as reflectorization. In short, the FID clause voices the collective opinion of a group of characters. Such collective focus is an inescapably authorial maneuver in that it highlights the narrator’s powers of omniscience.

Much like interior monologue in Martin, free indirect discourse in Leiber is used primarily for dramatic effect. That is, while the FID passages voice characters’ thoughts and emotions in an empathic manner, the focus is typically on dramatic rather than serious representation of consciousness. This is most apparent in the fact that the FID passages in Leiber usually take the form of an exclamation or a question, both of which readily translate into dramatic cues for punctuating the narration. All three preceding FID examples are highly typical in that they centrally incorporate exclamations. Indeed, this mixing of empathic representation and dramatic function often results in almost too empathic passages: it is as though the characters do nothing but internally scream at themselves. Rather than enhance the internal perspective, such FID actually distracts the reader from it. The dramatic function is also evident in how FID in Leiber relates to the narrative as a whole: it is not used very often, and, like psychonarration, it typically tags external action, and rarely extends to passages longer than a sentence or two. (There are only a handful of FID passages in the novel that run for more than two sentences. The Fafhrd and the calf scene is one such example.) Like psychonarration, then, it is used primarily for something other than the serious and sustained representation of figural consciousness.

Free indirect discourse in Martin, by comparison, is markedly serious. It often results in dramatic moments, yet it is primarily a serious consciousness technique. Its

use is also consistently empathic. It is a highly common technique in Martin, and, like psychonarration, runs the gamut between short and long instantiations. Moreover, as has already been noted, it frequently combines with consonant psychonarration. In fact, the longer the FID continues, the more likely it is to incorporate psychonarration.

Martin's narrator often employs FID in a low-key fashion to augment figural subjectivity. The following passage, for example, is mostly a combination of flashback exposition and psychonarration that sets the scene and opens up the back story through Will's recollection. However, note the subtle FID that dots the narration. (The other two characters in the scene are the southron Gared and Commander Royce.)

Will shared his [Gared's] unease. He had been four years on the Wall. The first time he had been sent beyond, all the old stories had come rushing back, and his bowels had turned to water. He had laughed about it afterward. He was a veteran of a hundred rangings by now, and the endless dark wilderness that the southron called the haunted forest had no more terrors for him.

Until tonight. Something was different tonight. There was an edge to this darkness that made his hackles rise. Nine days they had been riding, north and northwest and then north again, farther and farther from the Wall, hard on the track of a band of wildling raiders. Each day had been worse than the day that had come before it. Today was the worst of all. A cold wind was blowing out of the north, and it made the trees rustle like living things. All day, Will had felt as though something were watching him, something cold and implacable that loved him not. Gared had felt it too. Will wanted nothing so much as to ride hellbent for the safety of the Wall, but that was not a feeling to share with your commander.

Especially not a commander like this one. (Martin 2)

The perspective is undoubtedly Will's, yet the passage does not capture his subjectivity in any vivid sense. In fact, the expository nature of the passage suggests a narrating agency, and thus works against the internal focalization. Still, the passage does not read as authorial either, which, to my mind, results from the discreet FID that runs through it. First, there are the subtle subjectivity markers: the temporal deictic "by *now*", and the proximal deictic "*this* darkness", which locate the narrative perspective in the here and now of the story; the evocative "hellbent", which echoes Will's fear; and the personal "*your* commander". Second, the first two sentences and the sixth sentence of the second paragraph, as well as the single-sentence third paragraph are pure empathic FID ("Until



tonight”, “Something was different tonight”, “Today was the worst of all”, “Especially not a commander like this one”). There are no verbs of cognition to signal psychonarration, yet the four sentences clearly verbalize thoughts and emotions running through Will’s mind: his fear of something in the forest, and his disposition toward his commander (which is further exposed in the subsequent paragraphs). The sentences also incorporate additional deictics that are crucial to the FID effect (“tonight”, “Today”, “a commander like *this* one”). What is more, the sentences are neither exclamatory nor interrogative, which partly explains their low-key quality. Lastly, the exposition itself is strategically incomplete: “the Wall” and “all the old stories” are oblique references that are introduced as given information (“the”, “all the”) yet left unexplained, forcing the reader to imaginatively identify with Will’s subjective realm of experience and familiarity. While Will’s voice may not be pronounced, there is enough FID to at least tint the passage with it.

In addition to such short and subtle instances of FID, Martin’s narrative also abounds in longer and more overt ones. Take, for example, this passage which shows Arya bitterly reflecting on how her sister Sansa is much better suited to being a noble lady:

It wasn’t fair. Sansa had everything. Sansa was two years older; maybe by the time Arya had been born, there had been nothing left. Often it felt that way. Sansa could sew and dance and sing. She wrote poetry. She knew how to dress. She played the high harp *and* the bells. Worse, she was beautiful. Sansa had gotten their mother’s fine high cheekbones and the thick auburn hair of the Tullys. Arya took after their lord father. Her hair was a lusterless brown, and her face was long and solemn. Jeyne used to call her Arya Horseface, and neigh whenever she came near. It hurt that the one thing Arya could do better than her sister was ride a horse. Well, that and manage a household. Sansa had never had much of a head for figures. If she did marry Prince Joff, Arya hoped for his sake that he had a good steward. (Martin 70–71)

The opening “It wasn’t fair” empathically evokes Arya’s petulant disposition, and cues the FID that runs through the entire passage. Significantly, the FID is apparent in both diction and syntax. The former includes a number of subjectivity markers: the shocked

“the high harp *and* the bells”, which betrays Arya’s envy of Sansa’s skill in not one but two musical instruments; the despondent “*Worse*, she was beautiful”; the subjective denomination in “their *lord* father”, which echoes Arya’s reverence for (and slight distance to) her noble father; the emphatic “Well”, which punctuates the narration as though it were a mimetic rendering of Arya’s flow of thoughts; and the inadvertently sarcastic “a *good* steward”, which captures Arya’s childlike honesty about her sister’s poor accounting skills in a comically roundabout way.

The syntax, for its part, reflects Arya’s consciousness in that the passage is composed almost entirely of short, simple sentences. This creates the illusion that they are formulated in the mind of a child, or oriented toward such a mind. The childlike quality is accentuated by the substantial, though not pronounced, reliance on the coordinating conjunction “and”. The repetitive syntax in the first half also gives the passage a kind of breathlessness that correlates with the verbal output one conventionally expects from a child (“Sansa had . . . Sansa was . . . Sansa could . . . She wrote . . . She knew . . . She played . . . she was” (Martin 70)).

The syntax and the diction thus combine to produce a vivid evocation of figural subjectivity through FID. In fact, the FID effect is so strong that it will most likely subsume the brief psychonarration in the reading process (“Often it *felt* that way”, “Arya *hoped* for his sake that he had a good steward” (Martin 70–71)). That is, even though the two instances are technically built around verbs of cognition, the reader will most likely interpret them as part of the FID that surrounds them, rather than as psychonarration per se (cf. Fludernik’s “interpretative obstination” (*Fictions* 285, 451)).

Like psychonarration, FID in Martin is never really authorial. Aside from exposition, which may occasionally give the surrounding narrative an authorial touch, the FID consistently takes on an authorial tonality only when it is flanked by formal

denomination. In general, formal denomination is the one clearly dissonant feature that runs through the entire narrative. (Even the exposition is always recuperable in figural terms.) Familiar or subjective names are still the most common choice, of course. The third person narration typically names or identifies characters the way the reflector character would name or identify them: according to his or her subjective familiarity and current disposition (e.g., a Tyrion chapter will prefer “Tyrion” over “Tyrion Lannister” when referring to Tyrion as the reflector). Nonetheless, instances of formal denomination pop up throughout the novel (see also section 3.2. above). For example, consider the figural effect in the following passage, which is taken from the end of one of Eddard’s chapters. King Robert has just offered to marry his son to Eddard’s eldest daughter, and make Eddard the King’s Hand, which would take him away from his home in the north:

“Yes, yes, of course, tell Catelyn, sleep on it if you must.” The king reached down, clasped Ned by the hand, and pulled him roughly to his feet. “Just don’t keep me waiting too long. I am not the most patient of men.”

For a moment Eddard Stark was filled with a terrible sense of foreboding. *This* was his place, here in the north. He looked at the stone figures all around them, breathed deep in the chill silence of the crypt. He could feel the eyes of the dead. They were all listening, he knew. And winter was coming. (Martin 48)

From the familiar “Ned” in the first paragraph, which represents the standard reference to Eddard, the narrative suddenly shifts to the formal “Eddard Stark” in the concluding paragraph. Such an abrupt shift to the reflector character’s full name cannot but introduce a gap between character and narrator. In short, the opening sentence of the second paragraph reads as potentially dissonant psychonarration. However, Eddard’s voice is recuperated almost instantly: the second sentence is markedly empathic FID. (Note especially the doubly empathic “*This*”, which both locates the focalization in story space and emphatically approaches inner speech.) The formal naming is hardly enough to thwart the internal focalization that dominates the chapter, but its effect is

nevertheless jarring to the figural feel of the passage: the naming undermines the immersion into Eddard's perspective by creating a momentary hiatus between character and narrator. Still, the formal "Eddard Stark" serves a clear purpose: it lends the ending a solemnity that helps highlight the grave and momentous decision the character now faces.

This type of dramatic emphasis appears to be the most common use of formal denomination in Martin. Indeed, formal names are usually found either at the beginning or at the very end of a chapter, where dramatic notes tend to be the most effective. Formal denomination is also used for the odd introductory emphasis, as well as for simple stylistic variation. Again, Martin does not hesitate to put the needs of dramatic storytelling before those of formal consistency.

In sum, even though FID is dominantly empathic in both Leiber and Martin, it is only in Martin that the technique is used for the serious representation of characters' thoughts and emotions. In Leiber, the empathy tends to serve a dramatic rather than a strictly representational purpose, which makes the technique more about storytelling and less about figural consciousness. This emphasis on storytelling is also apparent in that FID is relatively scarce in Leiber, and that it is often ancillary to external action (i.e., story events). Martin represents the opposite: FID is not only substantial in the novel, but also exclusively serious, often extending to longer passages that eclipse the external scene entirely. It is an inseparable and constitutive aspect of the narration. Still, the FID effect is not always marked. As the above analysis shows, FID in Martin ranges from short and subtle to long and pronounced. It follows that the evocation of figural voice ranges accordingly: there are passages that incorporate only a touch of the reflector character's voice, and passages where the reflector's voice sounds through strongly. Together with the fact that FID is secondary to psychonarration in the novel,

this suggests that Martin's narrator does not imbue the narrative with figural voice as extensively and as thoroughly as the narrator of a figural narrative might.

### 3.5. Narrative Discourse

One additional feature that warrants a brief comment, since it has a bearing on the issue of voice, is narrative discourse style, that is, the language style used in the third person narration. In both Leiber and Martin, the heterodiegetic narrator employs a prose style that remains relatively consistent throughout the narrative. As the preceding excerpts already show, the two novels clearly differ in their prose. Here are two further examples chosen at random:

When he had gone, Eddard Stark went to the window and sat brooding. Robert had left him no choice that he could see. He ought to thank him. It would be good to return to Winterfell. He ought never have left. His sons were waiting there. Perhaps he and Catelyn would make a new son together when he returned, they were not so old yet. And of late he had often found himself dreaming of snow, of the deep quiet of the wolfswood at night.

And yet, the thought of leaving angered him as well. So much was still undone. Robert and his council of cravens and flatterers would beggar the realm if left unchecked . . . or, worse, sell it to the Lannisters in payment of their loans. And the truth of Jon Arryn's death still eluded him. Oh, he had found a few pieces, enough to convince him that Jon had indeed been murdered, but that was no more than the spoor of an animal on the forest floor. He had not sighted the beast itself yet, though he sensed it was there, lurking, hidden, treacherous. (Martin 356)

Thereafter Fafhrd had mastered one of the tethered Mingol horses despite its fiendish biting and kicking. The surviving girl had revealed among her other shriekings that her family might still be alive among the defenders of Klelg Nar, so Fafhrd had swung her up on his saddlebow despite her frantic struggles and efforts to bite. When she quieted somewhat, he had been stirred by her slim sprawly limbs so close and her lemur-large eyes and her repeated assertion, reinforced by horrendous maidenly curses and quaint childhood slang, that all men without exception were hairy beasts, this with a sneer at Fafhrd's luxuriously furred chest. But although tempted to amorousness he had restrained himself out of consideration for her coltish youth – she seemed scarce twelve, though tall for her age – and recent bereavement. Yet when he had returned her to her not very grateful and strangely suspicious family, she had replied to his courteous promise to return in a year or two with a wrinkling of her snub nose and a sardonic flirt of her blue eyes and slim shoulders, leaving Fafhrd somewhat doubtful of his wisdom in sparing her his wooing and also saving her in the first place. (Leiber, *Swords* 91–92)

Martin's prose has a simple and natural feel to it. The language remains more literate than colloquial, yet its syntax is neither especially formal nor elaborate. The sentences are typically short rather than long, simple rather than complex. Martin's narrator

usually steers clear of multiple subordination, and, as a result, the text is hardly ever convoluted. Adjectival and adverbial modifiers are used sparingly, and the diction in general is straightforward and down-to-earth, often idiomatic. There is inevitably some specialized and archaic vocabulary – terms relating to medieval arms and armor, for example – but this is never flaunted. In short, Martin’s prose is highly accessible, and rarely draws attention to the narrator as a mediating agency. (When it does draw attention, it is usually to the reflector character whose subjectivity it voices.)

Leiber, in contrast, is a more difficult read, especially for someone who is not familiar with his prose (or with the Sword and Sorcery aesthetic in general). In Leiber, the language tends to be formal, florid, and highly descriptive. Long and complex sentences seem to be as common as shorter and simpler ones, and the former sometimes run for so long and become so packed that the results fall just short of torturous, at least compared to Martin’s more economic prose. (The third and last sentences in the above Leiber quote are particularly heavy on the intake, although even they do not represent the narrator at his most verbose.) However, the most conspicuous aspect of Leiber’s prose style is its descriptive density: the narrator seems to tag nearly everything with descriptive modifiers (e.g., “its *fiendish* biting and kicking”, “her *frantic* struggles and efforts to bite”, “her *slim sprawly* limbs”, “her *lemur-large* eyes”, “*horrendous maidenly* curses”, “Fafhrd’s *luxuriously furred* chest”, “her *not very grateful and strangely suspicious* family” (ibid.)). Leiber’s language is markedly stylized, and, as such, draws attention to itself, and thus to the narrator, in a way that Martin’s seemingly less stylized prose does not. This gives Leiber’s prose an inescapably authorial flavor.

Since external focalization is the norm in Leiber, and since the stylized quality of the prose already suggests a speaker persona, the narrative language becomes synonymous with the narrator’s voice. This colors everything in the narrative as at least

minimally authorial. The authorial flavor affects even the internal focalization, since the prose style is consistently maintained throughout the novel (i.e., it is the same for both external and internal focalization). The language therefore introduces an authorial subtext to even the most figurally oriented passages. For example, it is not always possible to tell whether empathic FID should be read as authentic internal focalization, that is, as *empathic* FID, or as the narrator's empathic-imaginative projection, or reflectorization. The fact that FID in Leiber is typically dramatic rather than serious tallies with the latter option. The so-called dual voice hypothesis, which explains FID as the commingling of the voices of character and narrator, and typically denotes FID with an authorial orientation, can be provisionally applied to Leiber as well, even though the FID passages in his novel are rarely authorial per se (see Fludernik, *Fictions* 322–23, 350; Rimmon-Kenan 112; Stanzel 191, 198; cf. Cohn 112). Since the narrative language continuously suggests a speaker, even the most empathic FID passages cannot but be tinted with his voice.

It should be noted, however, that Leiber's narrator, while authorial, never emerges as a clear narrator persona. He never explicitly refers to himself or the act of narration, and generally steers clear of explicit judgments and intrusive commentary. The following passage is the closest he ever comes to establishing himself as an "I": "Imagine the scream of a leopard, the snarl of a tiger, and the roaring of a lion commingled, and one will have some faint suggestion of the sound the tin whistle produced" (Leiber, *Swords* 217). The imperative "Imagine" evokes an addressee, and, by extension, an addresser, while the indefinite "*one* will have" seems to include an "I". However, this "I" is entirely implicit. This is true for the novel as a whole. The narrative evokes an authorial narrator persona, yet it does this *through* rather than *in* the narration, so to speak. It is the various manifestations of external focalization, from panoramic

spatial focalization and reflectorization to footnotes and privileged exposition, accentuated by the stylized prose, that evoke the authorial narrator. The narrator's persona and voice are not as pronounced as those of an authorial narrator can be.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

The above analysis both reinforces and redefines the narrative patterns that emerged in Leiber and Martin in the previous discussion on space, time, and cognition. In Martin, on the one hand, the substantial use of consonant psychonarration and empathic FID for the serious representation of figural consciousness clearly signifies figural narration. The near lack of authorially oriented psychonarration and FID only enforces this, as does the inconspicuous narrative discourse that rarely draws attention to a narrating agency. On the other hand, the fact that psychonarration rather than FID is the chief consciousness technique, and that the FID effect is often subtle or subdued show that the narrative is not as figural as it could be. The formally conspicuous use of interior monologues may also distract from the figural narration. Nevertheless, a figural narrative situation, often in pronounced form, clearly dominates in Martin.

Leiber's case, again, is more complex. Psychonarration overshadows FID to a far greater extent than in Martin, as can be expected from authorial narration, yet its tone is typically neutral rather than dissonant. The FID passages, in turn, are nearly always empathic in form, which suggests figural narration. Their function, however, is dramatic rather than seriously figural, and they are relatively infrequent. This correlates with authorial narration. The authorial orientation in Leiber is also evident in that both the psychonarration and FID tend to take the form of short passages that are thematically subordinate to external action. Finally, the narrator employs a highly stylized narrative



discourse that colors everything as at least latently authorial, including the empathic FID.

Leiber's novel thus remains an authorial narrative that incorporates distinct figural tendencies. These tendencies, however, are not as pronounced or extensive in their evocation of figural subjectivity and voice as the amount of internally focalized or reflectorized perception and cognition may suggest. Despite his obvious affection for his fallibly human characters, Leiber's narrator is ultimately much more focused on storytelling than the serious and realistic representation of figural consciousness.

#### **4. THE INWARD TURN IN MODERN FANTASY**

This chapter presents a brief overview of the use of authorial and figural narration in modern fantasy beyond Leiber and Martin. It broadly charts the inward turn of fantasy by drawing on a further selection of works of mainstream fantasy. In contrast to the two preceding chapters, the present one offers little in-depth analysis. Instead, each work is briefly introduced in terms of its relation to the two narrative situations, and to the consciousness techniques, followed by a longish text extract that exemplifies these relations in a prototypical manner. Since the focus is on historical development, the works are presented in roughly chronological order according to their original date of publication.

Together, the selected works span the last 70 years of modern fantasy writing. I have chosen what I consider to be representative works by major fantasists, including several classics that have fundamentally influenced the development of the genre. In addition to American authors, I have also included a few early British ones whose work has helped shape the American fantasy tradition. Tolkien, for example, has had a far greater influence in the US than in the UK, and therefore warrants inclusion in any discussion on American fantasy (Jakubowski 223, 227, 231). (Indeed, his work is all but inescapable.) Finally, it needs to be emphasized that the selection is not meant to be in any way comprehensive. My aim is simply to provide a rough sketch of the dynamic between authorial and figural narration in modern American fantasy during the past seven decades.

#### 4.1. Before the 1970s: The Modern Classics

It is safe to say that Anglo-American figural fantasy narratives did not exist before the 1970s. All the modern classics that I am familiar with are authorial narratives. Lord Dunsany, E. R. Eddison, Robert E. Howard, Ursula K. Le Guin, Fritz Leiber, David Lindsay, Mervyn Peake, J. R. R. Tolkien, and T. H. White, for example, all rely on the authorial narrator in fashioning story worlds and representing experience within them. This is not to say that their work is cut from the exact same cloth, as it most certainly is not. The narratives differ widely in both form and content. Moreover, they employ authorial narrative techniques in diverse ways, mixing in figural techniques with equal variety. Yet the general authorial framework is the same for all. To exemplify this, I have chosen four texts by four different authors: Howard, Peake, Tolkien, and Le Guin.

Robert E. Howard (1906–36) is arguably the most influential early American fantasist. His importance to the genre is often regarded as equal to or second only to Tolkien's (Jakubowski 225; *Science* 1194; see *Fantasy* 481–83; *Science* 562, 589–90, 1194–96). Conan, the archetypal Sword and Sorcery hero, is Howard's most celebrated creation (*Fantasy* 482; *Science* 589). The Conan narratives are among the most action-oriented in the genre, which partly explains why Howard's narrator shows so little interest in his characters' inner lives. External focalization from without is the most common form of focalization. The representation of figural consciousness almost always takes the form of dissonant or neutrally toned psychonarration, wrapped in short, solitary passages. FID is scarce, and typically dramatic rather than empathic or serious, whereas interior monologues are virtually nonexistent. Internal focalization, or passages that approach internal focalization, are rare. This focus on external over internal reality is strikingly apparent in that the characters, particularly Conan, are often defined more by their outward appearance and physical actions than by their private thoughts and

emotions (which the narrator probes rarely enough as it is). Indeed, the overriding feeling in the Conan stories is often one of raw and visceral physicality. Yet despite his authorial sensibilities, the narrator never emerges as a distinct persona.

The following passage from the short story “Queen of the Black Coast” (1934) presents a typical example of Howard’s furious action-aesthetic. Conan, armored in mail and wielding a broadsword, fights off a ship-full of pirates with trademark gusto:

The fight on the *Argus* was short and bloody. The stocky sailors, no match for the tall barbarians, were cut down to a man. Elsewhere the battle had taken a peculiar turn. Conan, on the high-pitched poop, was on a level with the pirate’s deck. As the steel prow slashed into the *Argus*, he braced himself and kept his feet under the shock, casting away his bow. A tall corsair, bounding over the rail, was met in midair by the Cimmerian’s great sword, which sheared him cleanly through the torso, so that his body fell one way and his legs another. Then, with a burst of fury that left a heap of mangled corpses along the gunwales, Conan was over the rail and on the deck of the *Tigress*.

In an instant he was the center of a hurricane of stabbing spears and lashing clubs. But he moved in a blinding blur of steel. Spears bent on his armor or swished empty air, and his sword sang its death-song. The fighting-madness of his race was upon him, and with a red mist of unreasoning fury wavering before his blazing eyes, he cleft skulls, smashed breasts, severed limbs, ripped out entrails, and littered the deck like a shambles with a ghastly harvest of brains and blood.

Invulnerable in his armor, his back against the mast, he heaped mangled corpses at his feet until his enemies gave back panting in rage and fear. Then as they lifted their spears to cast them, and he tensed himself to leap and die in the midst of them, a shrill cry froze the lifted arms. They stood like statues, the black giants poised for the spear-casts, the mailed swordsman with his dripping blade. (Howard 126–27)

The scene is all action. The perspective is that of an omniscient observer focused on the wholesale presentation of physical mayhem. There are a few subtle touches of external focalization from within, yet these are merely footnotes to the action. Figural narrative techniques have little currency in Howardian poetics.

Mervyn Peake’s (1911–68) *Titus Groan* (1946), the first volume in his seminal *Gormenghast* series (1946–59), employs an authorial narrator that is both more overt than the one in Howard, and more interested in representing characters’ minds. For the most part, the narrative alternates between external focalization from without and external focalization from within. The narrator moves freely in story space, and constantly shifts focus from one character to another, rarely following the same

character over long stretches of story. There is little genuine internal focalization. Indeed, the narrative is permeated by an authorial presence, one that colors everything as at least latently grotesque, pathetic, absurd, or otherwise skewed. The narrator's fetishistic attention to detail, macabre as often as not, and the highly stylized prose are among the key ingredients. Still, there is much representation of figural consciousness. Psychonarration, usually dissonant, is the prevailing consciousness technique. FID and interior monologue find some use as well, often for dramatic purposes. Despite the solid focus on characters' minds, however, the representation of consciousness is rarely serious or psychologically realistic. Peake's characters are primarily types and caricatures – the sort of exaggerated fiction that allows the narrator to paint in broad strokes in keeping with his poetics of the grotesque and the macabre. Consider the focalization on the characters in the passage that finds the spindly Flay shadowing his would-be murderer, the monstrously fat Swelter, up a castle stairwell at night:

When Flay judged the silhouette [of Swelter] a good twelve paces distant he began to follow, and then there began the first of the episodes – that of the stalk. If ever man stalked man, Flay stalked Swelter. It is to be doubted whether, when compared with the angular motions of Mr Flay, any man on earth could claim to stalk at all. He would have to do it with another word.

The very length and shape of his limbs and joints, the very formation of his head, and hands and feet were constructed as though for this process alone. Quite unconscious of the stick insect action, which his frame was undergoing, he followed the creeping dome. For Mr Swelter was himself – at all events in his own opinion – on the tail of his victim. The tail did not happen to be where he supposed it, two floors above, but he was moving with all possible stealth, nevertheless. At the top of the first flight he would place his lantern carefully by the wall, for it was then that the candles began and continued at roughly equal distances, to cast their pale circles of light from niches in the walls. He began to climb.

If Mr Flay stalked, Mr Swelter *insinuated*. He insinuated himself through space. His body encroached, sleuth-like, from air-volume to air-volume, entering, filling and edging out of each in turn, the slow and vile belly preceding the horribly deliberate and potentially nimble progress of his fallen arches.

Flay could not see Swelter's feet, only the silhouetted dome, but by the way it ascended he could tell that the chef was moving one step at a time, his right foot always preceding his left, which he brought to the side of its dace-like companion. He went up in slow, silent jerks in the way of children, invalids or obese women. Flay waited until he had rounded the curve of the stairs and was on the first landing before he followed, taking five stone steps at a time. (Peake 305–06)

The focalization-shifts between the two characters, the omniscient manner in which the narrator weaves in and out of their transparent minds, the grotesque and evocative imagery that effectively paints the personalities on the characters, and the stylized language represent pure Peake. The perspective in the passage, as in the narrative at large, clearly originates from an authorial source.

J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973) is generally regarded as the single most important author in the fantasy genre, and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–55) as the single most influential work of fantasy (*Fantasy* 950–51; Jakubowski 223–24; *Science* 1194; see *Fantasy* 951; Jakubowski 227; *Science* 562, 1194–96; Swinfen 1). As such, the two have provided a powerful incentive for authorial narration in modern fantasy. *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954) is a case in point. In the novel, external focalization, narratorial omniscience, and authorially oriented psychonarration dominate to the point of eclipsing all in-story subjectivity. The narration is markedly reportorial throughout, and frequently takes on a panoramic or summative cast. The focalization shifts freely between the characters, and only rarely adopts the subjective perspective of a single character in a comprehensive fashion. There is also much collective focalization on characters' actions, emotions, thoughts, and perceptions that foregoes figural perspectivism in favor of more story-oriented narration. Such focalization is seldom reflectorized in the sense of evoking collective in-story subjectivity. FID is completely overshadowed by psychonarration, and there are virtually no interior monologues. In general, while there is plenty of representation of consciousness, the evocation of figural subjectivity in Tolkien remains scarce and superficial, always tinted with the narrator's perspective and voice. The following passage, which sees the Fellowship begin their journey through Moria, is typical Tolkien:

After only a brief rest they started on their way again. All were eager to get the journey over as quickly as possible, and were willing, tired as they were, to go on marching still for several hours. Gandalf walked in front as before. In his left hand he held up his glimmering staff, the light of which just showed the ground before his feet; in his right he held his sword Glamdring. Behind him came Gimli, his eyes glinting in the dim light as he turned his head from side to side. Behind the dwarf walked Frodo, and he had drawn the short sword, Sting. No gleam came from the blades of Sting or of Glamdring; and that was some comfort, for being the work of Elvish smiths in the Elder Days these swords shone with a cold light, if any Orcs were near at hand. Behind Frodo went Sam, and after him Legolas, and the young hobbits, and Boromir. In the dark at the rear, grim and silent, walked Aragorn.

The passage twisted round a few turns, and then began to descend. It went steadily down for a long while before it became level once again. The air grew hot and stifling, but it was not foul, and at times they felt currents of cooler air upon their faces, issuing from half-guessed openings in the walls. There were many of these. In the pale ray of the wizard's staff, Frodo caught glimpses of stairs and arches, and of other passages and tunnels, sloping up, or running steeply down, or opening blankly dark on either side. It was bewildering beyond hope of remembering.

Gimli aided Gandalf very little, except by his stout courage. At least he was not, as were most of the others, troubled by the mere darkness in itself. Often the wizard consulted him at points where the choice of way was doubtful; but it was always Gandalf who had the final word. The Mines of Moria were vast and intricate beyond the imagination of Gimli, Glóin's son, dwarf of the mountain-race though he was. To Gandalf the far-off memories of a journey long before were now of little help, but even in the gloom and despite all windings of the road he knew whither he wished to go, and he did not falter, as long as there was a path that led towards his goal. (*Fellowship* 407–08)

The passage is pure external focalization: focalization on external details and events alternates with brief and superficial focalization on the characters' minds. The latter includes both individual and collective external focalization from within. Figural subjectivity is entirely absent. The representation of consciousness is present merely to inform and to explain, not to flesh out character. As a fundamentally story-driven epic that aims to be mythic rather than realistic, *The Fellowship of the Ring* has little use for psychological realism and serious figural perspectivism.

Unlike her three colleagues, Ursula K. Le Guin (1929–) is more a humanist than a fantasist. It is therefore no surprise that *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), the first in a series of stories set in the titular otherworld, is the most character-driven of the four classics discussed in this chapter. The narrative blends markedly omniscient, often panoramic and summative focalization with a closer focus on a single character, usually Ged, the protagonist. Le Guin's narrator is very interested in Ged's inner world, and, as a result,

the novel incorporates much representation of figural consciousness. Still, this representation rarely takes the form of internal focalization as such, sustained or otherwise. The focalization from within typically carries an authorial touch, a sense of consciousness described rather than experienced. It is typically the philosophically-minded narrator's rather than the character's voice that emerges in the narration. Accordingly, reportorial psychonarration dominates the representation of consciousness. FID is infrequent, while interior monologue is nonexistent. Much like the narrators in the other three narratives above, and despite the authorial commentary and the occasional cues that suggest a future storytelling perspective, Le Guin's narrator does not emerge as an explicit persona. The following example passage is an authorially narrated summary of Ged's stay with his wizard colleague Vetch and his two siblings, Yarrow and Murre:

They [Ged and Vetch] talked together late that night, and though always they came back to the bitter matter of what lay before Ged, yet their pleasure in being together overrode all; for the love between them was strong and steadfast, unshaken by time or chance. In the morning Ged woke beneath his friend's roof, and while he was still drowsy he felt such wellbeing [sic] as if he were in some place wholly defended from evil and harm. All day long a little of this dream-peace clung to his thoughts, and he took it, not as a good omen, but as a gift. It seemed likely to him that leaving this house he would leave the last haven he was to know, and so while the short dream lasted he would be happy in it.

Having affairs he must see to before he left Iffish, Vetch went off to the other villages of the island with the lad who served him as prentice-sorcerer. Ged stayed with Yarrow and her brother, called Murre, who was between her and Vetch in age. He seemed not much more than a boy, for there was no gift or scourge of mage-power in him, and he had never been anywhere but Iffish, Tok, and Holp, and his life was easy and untroubled. Ged watched him with wonder and some envy, and exactly so he watched Ged: to each it seemed very queer that the other, so different, yet was his own age, nineteen years. Ged marvelled how one who had lived nineteen years could be so carefree. Admiring Murre's comely, cheerful face he felt himself to be all lank and harsh, never guessing that Murre envied him even the scars that scored his face, and thought them the track of a dragon's claws and the very rune and sign of a hero.

The two young men were thus somewhat shy with each other, but as for Yarrow she soon lost her awe of Ged, being in her own house and mistress of it. He was very gentle with her, and many were the questions she asked of him, for Vetch, she said, would never tell her anything. She kept busy those two days making dry wheatcakes [sic] for the voyagers to carry, and wrapping up dried fish and meat and other such provender to stock their boat, until Ged told her to stop, for he did not plan to sail clear to Selidor without a halt. (Le Guin 148–49)



The passage showcases both the narrator's attention to characters' thoughts and emotions, and the authorial confidence and understanding with which these are typically represented. The passage is also characteristic in its summative sweep. Despite the consistent focus on figural consciousness, the passage does not evoke the subjectivity of any of the characters. Le Guin's narrator, like the narrators in Howard, Peake, and Tolkien, represents experience in the story world not through the in-story perspective of a character, but through her own authority as the storyteller.

#### **4.2. 1977: Brooks and Donaldson**

Maxim Jakubowski highlights the year 1977 as a turning point in modern fantasy (228, see 227). Two major American authors broke into print this year: Terry Brooks with *The Sword of Shannara*, the first in a trilogy of novels<sup>17</sup>, and Stephen R. Donaldson with his seminal *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever* (comprising the novels *Lord Foul's Bane*, *The Illearth War*, and *The Power That Preserves*). Brooks was "one of the earliest of the blatant Tolkien imitators to achieve massive commercial success" (Jakubowski 227). *The Sword of Shannara* effectively threw open "the quest trilogy floodgates", and did as much to codify the Tolkien formula for epic fantasy as *The Lord of the Rings* (ibid.). Donaldson, while also working within the quest epic framework, did something new instead: in *Thomas Covenant*, he created what is possibly the first truly human, fully and realistically fleshed-out fantasy hero (see Jakubowski 228). Whereas Brooks is important in continuing and popularizing the Tolkien tradition, Donaldson's import lies precisely where he departs from this tradition: in the fully-

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<sup>17</sup> *The Sword of Shannara Trilogy* includes the novels *The Sword of Shannara*, *The Elfstones of Shannara* (1982), and *The Wishsong of Shannara* (1985). The trilogy is also known as *The Original Shannara Trilogy*.

realized human element that he introduced into the mainstream of modern fantasy. The human element is prefigured in earlier fantasy authors such as Leiber and Michael Moorcock (1939–), of course, but Donaldson was the first to institute it centrally and comprehensively (see Jakubowski 225, 226, 228). Incidentally, the Thomas Covenant novels are also, to my knowledge, the first figural narratives in the genre.

*Lord Foul's Bane*, which I have chosen as the Donaldson example, is mostly narrated from Covenant's subjective perspective. The narrative has a particularly strong figural foundation, since much of the story revolves around Covenant's psychological and emotional relationship with the magical otherworld in which he finds himself, a reality he desperately refuses to believe as real. Covenant's subjectivity colors and warps the representation throughout, which often results in vivid evocations of his voice. The use and distribution of consciousness techniques bears this out: the narrative is a mixture of markedly consonant psychonarration, empathic FID, and figurally oriented interior monologue, with psychonarration being the principal technique. Interior monologues, in particular, are used to great effect, and frequently produce the most figurally charged passages. The narrative seldom relinquishes Covenant's perspective, but when it does so, it is always for a clear thematic purpose, usually to evoke an image of Covenant as an object of narratorial observation. The stylized, often verbose narrative prose can sometimes call to mind a narrating agency as well. The figural effect, however, is rarely compromised. To take an example, I quote at length from the scene where Covenant first wakes up in the Land, the otherworld to which he has been transported, or which he is in the process of dreaming. Covenant is sitting on a circular stone slab surrounded by a low wall. Before him stands a girl, and behind the girl, beyond the wall, rises a mountain, all else is blue sky:

Where – ?

Awkwardly, as if his joints were half frozen with dread, he lurched to his feet.

At once, an immense panorama sprang into view below him, attacked his sight like a bludgeon of exhilaration and horror. He was on a stone platform four thousand feet or more above the earth. Birds glided and wheeled under his perch. The air was as clean and clear as crystal, and through it the great sweep of the landscape seemed immeasurably huge, so that his eyes ached with trying to see it all. Hills stretched away directly under him; plains unrolled toward the horizons on both sides; a river angled silver in the sunlight out of the hills on his left. All was luminous with spring, as if it had just been born in that morning's dew.

Bloody hell!

The giddy height staggered him. Vulture wings of darkness beat at his head. Vertigo whirled up at him, made the earth veer.

He did not know where he was. He had never seen this before. How had he come here? He had been hit by a police car, and Foul had brought him here. Foul had brought him here?

Brought me here?

Uninjured.

He reeled in terror toward the girl and the mountain. Three dizzy steps took him to the gap in the parapet. There he saw that he was on the top of a slim splinter of stone – at least five hundred feet long – that pointed obliquely up from the base of the cliff like a rigid finger accusing the sky. Stairs had been cut into the upper surface of the shaft, but it was as steep as a ladder.

For one spinning instant, he thought dumbly, I've got to get out of here. None of this is happening to me.

Then the whole insanity of the situation recoiled on him, struck at him out of the vertiginous air like the claws of a condor. He stumbled; the maw of the fall gaped below him. He started to scream silently:

No!

As he pitched forward, the girl caught his arm, heaved at him. He swung and toppled to the stone within the parapet, pulled his knees up against his chest, covered his head.

Insane! he cried as if he were gibbering.

Darkness writhed like nausea inside his skull. Visions of madness burned across his mindscape.

How?

Impossible!

He had been crossing the street. He insisted upon that desperately. The light had been green.

Where?

He had been hit by a police car.

Impossible!

It had aimed itself straight for his heart, and it had hit him.

And not injured him?

Mad. I'm going mad mad mad.

And not injured him?

Nightmare. None of this is happening, is happening, is happening.

Through the wild whirl of his misery, another hand suddenly clasped his. The grip was hard, urgent; it caught him like an anchor.

Nightmare! I'm dreaming. Dreaming!

The thought flared through his panic like a revelation. Dreaming! Of course he was dreaming. Juggling furiously, he put the pieces together. He had been hit by a police car – knocked unconscious. Concussion. He might be out for hours – days. And while he was out, he was having this dream.

That was the answer. He clutched it as if it were the girl's grip on his straining hand. It steadied him against his vertigo, simplified his fear. But it was not enough. The darkness still swarmed at him as if he were carrion Foul had left behind.

How?

Where do you get dreams like this?

He could not bear to think about it; he would go mad. He fled from it as if it had already started to gnaw on his bones.

Don't think about it. Don't try to understand. Madness – madness is the only danger. Survive! Get going. Do something. Don't look back.

He forced his eyes open; and as he focused on the sunlight, the darkness receded, dropped away into the background and came hovering slowly behind him as if it were waiting for him to turn and face it, fall prey to it. (Donaldson 45–46)

The passage evokes Covenant's subjectivity and voice with visceral intensity. The internal focalization in the novel is not always this pronounced, but the figural feel of the passage is typical of the narrative as a whole. The use of interior monologues is also characteristic: they are never orthographically marked, and often go untagged. This grants them an immersive quality that is missing from the monologues in, for example, Martin. Indeed, in addition to being the first figural fantasy narrative, *Lord Foul's Bane* may well be the most figural fantasy narrative to date.

Toward the other end of the spectrum, Brooks's *The Sword of Shannara* reads primarily as neutrally toned external focalization, evoking neither the narrator's nor the characters' voices in any pronounced way. The narrative alternates between a closer focus on a single character on the one hand, and a collective or continuously shifting focus on two or more characters on the other. Both show scant commitment to figural perspectivism, and, as a result, the overriding feel of the narration is one of distance to character. Although the narrator focalizes figural minds quite often, the focalization is usually superficial and rarely extended, and typically serves either action or exposition, which further explains the quality of distance. The narrator's main interest seems to lie in telling and explaining the story; there is little room for psychologically immersive representation of consciousness. This approach is reflected in the configuration of consciousness techniques: neutral or dissonant psychonarration dominates, FID is rare and usually dramatic, and there seem to be no interior monologues. Here is an example:

Within half an hour, the company was on the path leading northward through the forests of the Wolfsktaag, moving steadily, without conversation for the most part, in the same order as before. Hendel had relinquished his spot as point man to the talented Menion Leah, who moved with the noiseless grace of a cat through the tangled boughs and brush over the

leaf-strewn floor. Hendel felt a certain respect for the Prince of Leah. In time he would be unsurpassed by any woodsman. But the Dwarf knew as well that the highlander was brash and still inexperienced, and that in these lands only the cautious and the seasoned survived. Nevertheless, practice was the only way to learn, so the Dwarf grudgingly allowed the young tracker to lead the party, contenting himself with double-checking everything that appeared on the path before them.

One particularly disturbing detail caught the Dwarf's attention almost immediately, although it completely escaped the notice of his companion. The trail failed to reveal any sign of the man who had come this way only hours earlier. Although he scanned the ground meticulously, Hendel was unable to discern even the slightest trace of a human footprint. The strips of white cloth appeared at regular intervals, just as Allanon had promised they would be. Yet there was no sign of his passage. Hendel knew the tales about the mysterious wanderer and had heard that he possessed extraordinary powers. But he had never dreamed that the man was such an accomplished tracker that he could completely hide his own trail. The Dwarf could not understand it, but decided to keep the matter to himself.

At the rear of the procession, Balinor, too, had been wondering about the enigmatic man from Paranor, the historian who knew so much that no one else had even suspected, the wanderer who seemed to have been everywhere and yet about whom so little was known. He had known Allanon off and on for many years while growing up in his father's kingdom, but could only vaguely recall him, a dark stranger who had come and gone without warning, who had always seemed so kind to him, yet had never offered to reveal his own mysterious background. The wise men of all the lands knew Allanon as a scholar and a philosopher without equal. Others knew him only as a traveler who paid his way with good advice and who possessed a kind of grim common sense with which no one could find fault. Balinor had learned from him and had come to trust in him with what could almost be described as blind faith. Yet he had never really understood the historian. He pondered that thought for a while, and then in what came as an almost casual revelation, he realized that in all the time he had spent with Allanon, he had never seen any sign of a change in his age.

The trail began to turn upward again and to narrow as the great forest trees and heavy underbrush closed in like solid walls. Menion had followed the strips of cloth dutifully and had little doubt that they were on the right path, but automatically began to double-check himself as the going became noticeably tougher than before. It was almost noon when the trail branched unexpectedly, and a surprised Menion paused.

"This is strange. A fork in the trail and no marker—I can't understand why Allanon would fail to leave a sign." (Brooks, *Sword* 118–19)

Most of the passage is taken up by focalization from within the characters, yet the impression is not that of apprehending the story world through their eyes. Instead, the effect is closer to an external report on their thoughts. Moreover, the focalization is not so much about fleshing out figural consciousness as it is about explaining the character of Allanon (albeit from the somewhat limited perspective of the characters). Brooks's narrative lacks Tolkien's more stylized prose, and his narrator is more covert than the one in Tolkien, but both texts clearly share the same authorial, story-oriented quest fantasy framework.

### 4.3. From the 1980s to the 2000s: Toward Figural Fantasy

Modern American fantasy of the early 1980s seems to gravitate toward authorial narration. The narratives are not as openly authorial as the classics – the narrators are more covert, their language is less mannered, and the focalization tends to be neutrally toned as often as not – yet the authorial framework remains. The model is closer to Brooks than Donaldson. It is not until the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s that American fantasy begins to implement Donaldson's example in force. The 1990s stands out as something of a Renaissance for figural fantasy, a trend that continues unabated in the early 2000s. While the balance now appears to have tipped in favor of figural narration, the authorial narrator is by no means gone. To map out this development, I look at selected works by the following authors: David Drake, David and Leigh Eddings, Raymond E. Feist, Robin Hobb, Robert Jordan, Guy Gavriel Kay, and Tad Williams, as well as Brooks. With some authors, I provide contrasting readings between an earlier work and a later one.

David Eddings's (1931–) *Pawn of Prophecy* (1982), the first novel in the popular *Belgariad* series (1982–84) about the magically fated boy Garion, later Belgarion, is interesting in that it is an authorial narrative that resembles a figural one. The narration is technically restricted to what Garion knows and perceives, yet this perspectivism is hardly ever implemented as internal focalization. Despite the close focus on Garion, the focalization tends toward the external: instead of apprehending the story world through Garion's eyes, the perspectival effect is typically one of viewing the story world over Garion's shoulder. This looking-over-the-shoulder quality frequently takes on a reflectorized cast as the narrator empathically identifies with the hero's mood or situation. For the most part, however, the focalization evokes neither Garion's subjective perspective nor the narrator's authorial one in any marked way (although

there is usually the feeling of being safe and sound in the hands of an infallible observer). Psychonarration, ranging between neutral and subtly dissonant, dominates the representation of consciousness almost completely. There are no interior monologues, and only a few FID passages. In general, the penetrations inside Garion's mind tend to be short-lived and superficial. Eddings's narrator, in the classic quest fantasy tradition, is much more interested in story than consciousness. The following passage is a case in point. The fourteen-year-old Garion is moping after having been left out of an important meeting:

Garion sat alone, wounded to the quick by his exclusion. He was at an age where his self-esteem was very tender, and inwardly he writhed at the lack of regard implicit in his not being invited to join them. Hurt and offended, he sulkily left the great hall and went to visit his boar which hung in an ice-filled cooling room just off the kitchen. At least the boar had taken him seriously.

One could, however, spend only so much time in the company of a dead pig without becoming depressed. The boar did not seem nearly so big as he had when he was alive and charging, and the tusks were impressive but neither so long nor so sharp as Garion remembered them. Besides, it was cold in the cooling room and sore muscles stiffened quickly in chilly places.

There was no point in trying to visit Barak. The red-bearded man had locked himself in his chamber to brood in blackest melancholy and refused to answer his door, even to his wife. And so Garion, left entirely on his own, moped about for a while and then decided that he might as well explore this vast palace with its dusty, unused chambers and dark, twisting corridors. He walked for what seemed hours, opening doors and following hallways that sometimes ended abruptly against blank stone walls.

The palace of Anheg was enormous, having been, as Barak had explained, some three thousand years and more in construction. One southern wing was so totally abandoned that its entire roof had fallen in centuries ago. Garion wandered there for a time in the second-floor corridors of the ruin, his mind filled with gloomy thoughts of mortality and transient glory as he looked into rooms where snow lay thickly on ancient beds and stools and the tiny tracks of mice and squirrels ran everywhere. And then he came to an unroofed corridor where there were other tracks, those of a man. The footprints were quite fresh, for there was no sign of snow in them and it had snowed heavily the night before. At first he thought the tracks might be his own and that he had somehow circled and come back to a corridor he had already explored, but the footprints were much larger than his. (Eddings, *Pawn* 208–09)

Despite the consistent focus on Garion's thoughts and emotions, his subjectivity does not emerge in a figural manner. Still, the passage is not entirely neutral in tone: there is a subtle touch of good-natured wit to the narration that is sympathetic to the young hero's misery. This wit originates in the narrator rather than in Garion himself, and creates the

sort of faint reflectorization that often hedges the narrative. Eddings's narrator is by no means overt, but he is nonetheless an unmistakable authorial presence.

Raymond E. Feist's (1945–) *Magician: Apprentice* (1982/1992)<sup>18</sup> is formally identical to Brooks's *The Sword of Shannara*. It is mostly neutrally toned, reportorial narration that neither espouses solid figural subjectivity nor shows an overtly authorial narrator. The framework of external focalization is apparent in the authorial strategies scattered across the narration, chiefly authorial knowledge and unrestricted shifts in focalization. The narrative typically stays close to one of the characters, and includes much representation of figural consciousness. The internal focus on character is usually superficial, however, skimming the characters' minds rather than fleshing them out as in-story subjectivities of tangible figurality. Internal focalization is therefore rare, with the narrative perspective tending toward a neutral cast. Neutrally toned psychonarration is the dominant consciousness technique; FID is infrequent, although usually empathic in tone (a departure from Brooks); and interior monologues, orthographically unmarked yet tagged, are virtually nonexistent. For example, consider the narrative perspective in the passage below. Duke Borric's party from Crydee, along with the boy Pug who is one of the main characters in the novel, arrives at Duke Kerus's palace in Salador:

Riding through the city, Pug realized how much of a frontier town Crydee was. In spite of Lord Borric's political power, he was still Lord of a frontier province.

Along the streets, citizens stood gawking at the western Duke from the wild frontier of the Far Coast. Some cheered, for it seemed like a parade, but most stood quietly, disappointed that the Duke and his party looked like other men, rather than blood-drenched barbarians.

When they reached the courtyard of the palace, household servants ran to take their horses. A household guard showed the soldiers from Krondor to the soldiers' commons, where they would rest before returning to the Prince's city. Another, with a captain's badge of rank on his tunic, led Borric's party up the steps of the building.

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<sup>18</sup> *Magician* (1982) originally came out as a truncated single volume. In 1992, to celebrate the novel's tenth anniversary, the Author's Preferred Edition was published, with much of the cut material now reinserted. Both editions have also been published in two parts: *Magician: Apprentice* (1986/1994) and *Magician: Master* (1986/1994). The contents are identical to the single-volume editions.



Pug looked with wonder, for this palace was even larger than the Prince's in Krondor. They walked through several outer rooms, then reached an inner courtyard. Here fountains and trees decorated a garden, beyond which stood the central palace. Pug realized that the building they had passed through was simply one of the buildings surrounding the Duke's living quarters. He wondered what use Lord Kerus could possibly have for so many buildings and such a large staff.

They crossed the garden courtyard and mounted another series of steps toward a reception committee that stood in the door of the central palace. Once this building might have been a citadel, protecting the surrounding town, but Pug couldn't bring himself to imagine it as it might have been ages ago, for numerous renovations over the years had transformed an ancient keep into a glittering thing of glass and marble.

Duke Kerus's chamberlain, an old dried-up stick of a man with a quick eye, knew every noble worth noting—from the borders of Kesh in the south to Tyr-Sog in the north—by sight. His memory for faces and facts had often saved Duke Kerus from embarrassment. By the time Borric had made his way up the broad stairway from the courtyard, the chamberlain had provided Kerus with a few personal facts and a quick evaluation of the right amount of flattery required. (Feist, *Magician* 308–09)

The occasional psychonarration on Pug's thoughts and perceptions does little to anchor the focalization in Pug's subjectivity. Instead, the effect is closer to externally focalized exposition and description, nominally motivated by Pug's consciousness. The sudden shift from Pug to Duke Kerus's chamberlain in the last paragraph, followed by authorial exposition on the latter, is typical Feist. Much like the narrators in Brooks and Eddings, Feist's rarely has time for in-depth focus on character.

For Jakubowski, *The Fionavar Tapestry* trilogy (1984–87) by Guy Gavriel Kay (1954–) is one of the decisive works responsible for securing a true human element for modern fantasy (228). Unlike Donaldson's *Lord Foul's Bane*, however, Kay's novels are not figural narratives. The opening novel, *The Summer Tree* (1984), combines authorial narration and figural narration in almost equal measure. On the one hand, there is much omnisciently oriented exposition, description, panoramic narration, and summary that suggest an authorial framework. External focalization on figural consciousness is also common, though seldom dissonant. On the other hand, the focus on the main characters often develops into extended internal focalization, increasingly so toward the end. The novel includes whole chapters that consist solely of close internal focalization. There is almost a kind of tug of war between these two modes, the classic authorial paradigm of

epic storytelling and the new figural paradigm with its focus on character. Still, what is constant throughout the novel, is a keen interest in character. As might be expected, psychonarration is the principal technique for representing consciousness, ranging mainly between markedly consonant and neutral in tone. The narrative also incorporates a solid amount of empathic FID. To exemplify the two competing strains running through the narrative, here are two separate quotes:

He landed badly, but the reflexes of an athlete took him rolling through the fall, and at the end of it he was on his feet, unhurt. Very angry, though.

He had opted out, damn it! What the hell right did Kim Ford have to grab his arm and haul him to another world? What the. . .

He stopped; the fury draining as realization came down hard. She had, she really *had* taken him to another world.

A moment ago he had been in a room in the Park Plaza Hotel, now he found himself outdoors in darkness with a cool wind blowing, and a forest nearby; looking the other way, he saw wide rolling grasslands stretching away as far as he could see in the moonlight.

He looked around for the others, and then as the fact of isolation slowly came home, Dave Martyniuk's anger gave way to fear. They weren't friends of his, that was for sure, but this was no time or place to have ended up alone.

They couldn't be far, he thought, managing to keep control. Kim Ford had had his arm; surely that meant she couldn't be far away, her and the others, and that Lorenzo Marcus guy who'd got him into this in the first place. And was going to get him out, or deal with severe bodily pain, Martyniuk vowed. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Criminal Code.

Which reminded him: looking down, he saw that he was still clutching Kevin Laine's Evidence notes.

The absurdity, the utter incongruousness in this night place of wind and grass acted, somehow, to loosen him. He took a deep breath, like before the opening jump in a game. It was time to get his bearings. Boy Scout time. (Kay 241-42)

They woke, all three of them, on soft grass in the morning light. The horses grazed nearby. They were on the very fringes of the forest; southward a road ran from east to west, and beyond it lay low hills. One farmhouse could be seen past the road, and overhead birds sang as if it were the newest morning of the world. Which it was.

In more ways than the obvious, after the cataclysms that the night had known. Such powers had moved across the face of Fionavar as had not been gathered since the worlds were spun and the Weaver named the gods. Iorweth Founder had not endured that blast of Rangat, seen that hand in the sky, nor had Conary known such thunder in Mörnirwood, or the white power of the mist that exploded up from the Summer Tree, through the body of the sacrifice. Neither Revor nor Amairgen had ever seen a moon like the one that had sailed that night, nor had the Baelrath blazed so in answer on any other hand in the long telling of its tale. And no man but Ivor dan Banor had ever seen Imraith-Nimphais bear her Rider across the glitter of the stars.

Given such a gathering, a concatenation of powers such that the worlds might never be the same, how small a miracle might it be said to be that Dave awoke with his friends in the freshness of that morning on the southern edge of Pendaran, with the high road from North Keep to Rhoden running past, and a horn lying by his side.

A small miracle, in the light of all that had shaken the day and night before, but that which grants life where death was seen as certain can never be inconsequential, or even less than wondrous, to those who are the objects of its intercession.

So the three of them rose up, in awe and great joy, and told their stories to each other while morning's bird-song spun and warbled overhead. (Kay 323-24)

The strong figurality of the first quote and the epic-omniscient sweep of the second one aptly typify the two extremes between which *The Summer Tree* oscillates. In combining an authorial framework with substantial, often close internal focalization, the novel can be seen as a figural upgrade from Leiber: rather than an authorial narrative with figural tendencies, *The Summer Tree* is literally an authorial-figural narrative. Jakubowski's description of Kay's work as "synthesizing the human frailties introduced to the genre by Donaldson with the exemplary myth creation of Tolkien's tradition" is equally appropriate (228). Jakubowski may be talking about thematics, but his comment unwittingly reflects the convergence of two different narrative modes in Kay.

Tad Williams's (1957–) *The Dragonbone Chair* (1988), the first volume in the *Memory, Sorrow and Thorn* series (1988–93), is probably the first figural fantasy narrative since Donaldson's *Covenant* novels. The story is primarily told through the perspective of the main character, the scullion Simon. Supporting reflector characters crop up as the story progresses, but the most substantial and immersive internal focalization is reserved for Simon. The narration frequently turns inward on the focalizing consciousness, betraying a sound psychological foundation similar to Donaldson. Consonant psychonarration and empathic FID are the principal means for representing figural consciousness. Much like in Martin, interior monologues amount to a relevant though infrequent phenomenon; the monologues are always italicized, sometimes tagged, and equal parts dramatic and empathic. Together, the three techniques imbue the narrative with vivid figurality. Here is a prototypical passage:

Simon slumped back down into the grass, clasping his hands behind his head. He had slept a long while: the rich sun was almost straight overhead. It made the hairs on his forearms glow like molten copper; the tips of his ragged shoes looked so far away he could almost imagine them the peaks of distant mountains.

A sudden cold sliver of memory pierced his drowsiness. How had he gotten here? What . . . ?

A dark presence at his shoulder brought him quickly onto his knees; he turned to see the tree-mantled mass of Thisterborg looming behind him, not half a league away. Every detail

was stunningly clear, a pattern of precise edges; but for the troubling throb of memory it might have seemed comfortable and cool, a placid hill rising through encircling trees, banded with shade and bright green leaves. Along its crest were the Anger Stones, faint gray points against the blue sky.

The vivid spring day was now corrupted by a mist of dream—what had happened last night? He had fled the castle, of course—those moments, his last with Morgenes, were burned into his very heart—but after? What were these nightmarish memories? Endless tunnels? Elias? A fire, and white-haired demons?

*Dreams—idiot, bad dreams. Terror and tiredness and more terror. I ran through the graveyard at night, fell down at last, slept and dreamed.*

But the tunnels, and . . . a black casket? His head still hurt, but there was also an odd sense of numbness, as if ice had been laid on an injury. The dream had seemed so real. Now it was distant, slippery and meaningless—a dark pang of fear and pain that would drift away like smoke if he allowed it to—or, at least, he hoped it would. He pushed the memories down, burying them as deeply as he could, and closing his mind over them like the lid of a box.

*It's not as though I don't have enough things to worry about. . . .*

The bright sun of Belthainn Day had smoothed some of the kinks from his muscles, but he was still sore . . . and very hungry. He clambered stiffly to his feet and brushed the clinging grass from his tattered, mud-smeared clothes. He stole another look at Thisterborg. *Did* the ashes of a great fire still smolder among the stones there? Or had the shattering events of the day before pushed him for a while into madness? The hill stood, impassive; whatever secrets might lurk beneath the cloak of trees, or nestle in the crown of stones, Simon did not want to know. There were already too many hollows that needed filling.

Turning his back on Thisterborg, he faced across the downs to the dark breakfront of the forest. Staring across the vast expanse of open land, he felt a deep sorrow welling up within him, and pity for himself. He was so alone! They had taken everything from him, and left him without home or friends. He slapped his hands together in anger and felt the palms sting. Later! Later he would cry; now he had to be a man. But it was all so horribly unfair!

He breathed in and out deeply, and looked again to the distant woods. Somewhere near that thin line of shadow, he knew, ran the Old Forest Road. It rolled for miles along Aldheorte's southern perimeter, sometimes at a distance, sometimes sidling up close to the old trees like a teasing child. In other places it actually passed beneath the forest's eaves, winding through dark bowers and silent, sun-arrowed clearings. A few small villages and an occasional roadhouse nestled in the forest's shadow.

*Perhaps I can find some work to do—even to earn a meal, anyway. I feel hungry as a bear . . . a just-woken bear, at that. Starved! I haven't eaten since before . . . before . . .*

He bit his lip, hard. There was nothing else to do but start walking. (Williams 187–88)

Here, as in much of the narrative, figural consciousness and voice emerge with tangible subjectivity.

There is some external focalization in Williams, proportionally more than in either Donaldson or Martin, but it is never markedly authorial and only rarely extended. The opening chapter, dominated by covert external focalization, seems to be the only clear exception to this rule, with pockets of figurality scattered here and there. These sections

in Williams seem almost like leftovers from the classic Tolkien paradigm.<sup>19</sup> In overall effect, however, *The Dragonbone Chair* rivals *Lord Foul's Bane* and *A Game of Thrones* in its figurality.

Brooks returns to the Shannara universe in *The Scions of Shannara* (1990), the opening volume to *The Heritage of Shannara* tetralogy (1990–93). While *The Scions of Shannara* is no less an epic quest fantasy than, for example, *The Sword of Shannara*, there is a marked difference: the former reads mainly as a figural narrative, with the narrative perspective generally restricted to a single in-story subjectivity. Yet, despite this figural orientation, the narrative does not appropriate the reflectors' voices comprehensively or consistently. The focalization may be internal, but its figural effect is rarely pronounced. There are at least two reasons for this. First, although the narration favors consonant psychonarration and empathic FID in representing figural consciousness, neither technique is used to the same effect as, for example, in Williams above. Second, the shadow of authorial narration still lingers over Brooks's poetics. Formal denomination is frequent, and can appear anywhere; exposition is sometimes so overt and extensive that the figural framework threatens to tear at the seams; chapters often open and close with authorial flourish; and the FID sometimes takes on a didactic cast as though the narrator/implicit author was speaking through the characters, usurping their voices in order to preach his own point of view. But even so, the figural framework is usually unmistakable:

Par Ohmsford drifted.

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<sup>19</sup> In discussing his approach to writing the novel, Williams notes that there is a “pseudo-Tolkien tone” to the narration that “still lingers in the initial paragraphs of the first chapter, influenced not just by Tolkien but by Lord Dunsany and Mervyn Peake” (vii). Following this “false start”, Williams “quickly found a more naturalistic and personal way to speak to [his] readers” (ibid.). Although Williams does not talk about authorial and figural narration as such, his comments on tone and voice revealingly touch on these.

He did not sleep, for in sleeping he would dream and his dreams haunted him. Nor did he wake, for in waking he would find the reality that he was so desperate to escape.

He simply drifted, half in and half out of any recognizable existence, tucked somewhere back in the gray in-between of what is and isn't, where his mind could not focus and his memories remained scattered, where he was warm and secure from the past and future both, curled up deep inside. There was a madness upon him, he knew. But the madness was welcome, and he let it claim him without a struggle. It made him disoriented and distorted his perceptions and his thoughts. It gave him shelter. It cloaked him in a shroud of nonbeing that kept everything walled away—and that was what he needed.

Yet even walls have chinks and cracks that let through the light, and so it was with his madness. He sensed things—whispers of life from the world he was trying so hard to hide from. He felt the blankets that wrapped him and the bed on which he lay. He saw candles burning softly through a liquid haze, pinpricks of yellow brightness like islands on a dark sea. Strange beasts looked down at him from cabinets, shelves, boxes, and dressers, and their faces were formed of cloth and fur with button eyes and sewn noses, with ears that drooped and tipped, and with studied, watchful poses that never changed. He listened as words were spoken, floating through the air as motes of dust on streamers from the sun.

"He's very sick, lovely Damson," he heard one voice say.

And the other replied, "He's protecting himself, Mole."

Damson and Mole. He knew who they were, although he couldn't quite place them. He knew as well that they were talking about him. He didn't mind. What they were saying didn't make any difference.

Sometimes he saw their faces through the chinks and cracks.

The Mole was a creature with round, furry features and large, questioning eyes who stood above him, looking thoughtful. Sometimes he brought the strange beasts to sit close by. He looked very much the same as the beasts, Par thought. He called them by name. He spoke with them. But the beasts never answered back.

The girl fed him sometimes. Damson. She spooned soup into his mouth and made him drink, and he did so without argument. There was something perplexing about her, something that fascinated him, and he tried talking to her once or twice before giving up. Whatever it was he wished to say refused to show itself. The words ran away and hid. His thoughts faded. He watched her face fade with them. (Brooks, *Scions* 412–13)

The formal denomination that opens the passage, and the heavily descriptive narration of a mental state that should be indescribable may suggest an authorial narrator, yet the perspectivism running through the passage clearly takes its cue from Par rather than any external agency. Despite the vestiges of authorial narration, and the underdeveloped evocation of in-story consciousness, Brooks has clearly crossed over into the figural.

The next three novels, published in the 1990s, are all figural narratives. There are, of course, differences in their implementation. Like Brooks's *The Scions of Shannara*, Robert Jordan's (1948–) *The Eye of the World* (1990) employs internal focalization centrally, but not in as pronounced a fashion as the more figurally charged fantasy narratives. In particular, it lacks the strongly empathic FID texture that we find, for example, in Martin. Likewise, David Drake's (1945–) *Lord of the Isles* (1997) reads

mostly as internal focalization that skirts strong figurality. But rather than lacking in FID as such, this effect is mainly due to the narrative being organized into exceptionally short chapters, typically two to four pages long. There is simply no room for extended passages of focalization from within. Brief, subtle authorial slippages are also frequent in Drake, as though the figural paradigm has yet to come to its own. By comparison, Robin Hobb's (1952–) *Ship of Magic* (1998) is a pure figural narrative formally similar to Martin's. Its internal focalization is immersive and often pronounced, and its strong figurality is on a par with the figurality in Martin and Donaldson. Like Martin, Hobb uses consonant psychonarration and empathic FID to great effect. External focalization, usually in the guise of authorial denomination or brief visual portraits of reflector characters, is negligible.<sup>20</sup>

The following excerpts exemplify the characteristic figural perspectivism in the three novels. Rand, the principal reflector in Jordan's *The Eye of the World*, escapes his home as it is being overrun by strange humanoid beasts:

“Run, lad! Hide in the woods!” The bodies in the doorway jerked as others outside tried to pull them clear. Tam thrust a shoulder under the massive table; with a grunt he heaved it over atop the tangle. “There are too many to hold! Out the back! Go! Go! I’ll follow!”

Even as Rand turned away, shame filled him that he obeyed so quickly. He wanted to stay and help his father, though he could not imagine how, but fear had him by the throat, and his legs moved on their own. He dashed from the room, toward the back of the house, as fast as he had ever run in his life. Crashes and shouts from the front door pursued him.

He had his hands on the bar across the back door when his eye fell on the iron lock that was never locked. Except that Tam had done just that tonight. Letting the bar stay where it was, he darted to a side window, flung up the sash and threw back the shutters. Night had replaced twilight completely. The full moon and drifting clouds made dappled shadows chase one another across the farmyard.

*Shadows*, he told himself. Only shadows. The back door creaked as someone outside, or something, tried to push it open. His mouth went dry. A crash shook the door in its frame and lent him speed; he slipped through the window like a hare going to ground, and cowered against the side of the house. Inside the room, wood splintered like thunder.

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<sup>20</sup> Jordan's *The Eye of the World* is the first volume of the ongoing *The Wheel of Time* series, currently in its eleventh volume, with the twelfth and supposedly final volume to be published in 2008. Drake's *Lord of the Isles* is the first book in the Howard-influenced series by the same name. At present, the series numbers seven books, and is expected to wrap up in two more. Hobb's *Ship of Magic* is the first in a trilogy of books titled *The Liveship Traders* (1998–2000).

He forced himself up to a crouch, made himself peer inside, just with one eye, just at the corner of the window. In the dark he could not make out much, but more than he really wanted to see. The door hung askew, and shadowed shapes moved cautiously into the room, talking in low, guttural voices. Rand understood none of what was said; the language sounded harsh, unsuited to a human tongue. Axes and spears and spiked things dully reflected stray glimmers of moonlight. Boots scraped on the floor, and there was a rhythmic click, as of hooves, as well.

He tried to work moisture back into his mouth. Drawing a deep, ragged breath, he shouted as loudly as he could. "They're coming in the back!" The words came out in a croak, but at least they came out. He had not been sure they would. "I'm outside! Run, father!" With the last word he was sprinting away from the farmhouse.

Coarse-voiced shouts in the strange tongue raged from the back room. Glass shattered, loud and sharp, and something thudded heavily to the ground behind him. He guessed one of them had broken through the window rather than try to squeeze through the opening, but he did not look back to see if he was right. Like a fox running from hounds he darted into the nearest moon-cast shadows as if headed for the woods, then dropped to his belly and slithered back to the barn and its larger, deeper shadows. Something fell across his shoulders, and he thrashed about, not sure if he was trying to fight or escape, until he realized he was grappling with the new hoe handle Tam had been shaping.

*Idiot!* For a moment he lay there, trying to stop panting. *Coplin fool idiot!* At last he crawled on along the back of the barn, dragging the hoe handle with him. It was not much, but it was better than nothing. Cautiously he looked around the corner at the farmyard and the house.

Of the creature that had jumped out after him there was no sign. It could be anywhere. Hunting him, surely. Even creeping up on him at that very moment. (68–70)

Sharina is disgusted when she realizes that Asera and the wizard Meder mean to sacrifice two chickens in order to summon a fair wind for sailing in Drake's *Lord of the Isles*:

"Surely you've killed a chicken before, girl?" Asera said in amazement. Shadows from the setting sun deepened the furrows of her frown.

"I've killed hundreds," Sharina said flatly. "More than that, I suppose. To eat. I don't like magic and I'm not going to be part of it."

She turned and walked away, her body shaking. "I don't *understand*," Meder called after her.

Sharina didn't understand either. She'd lived too close to chickens to have any affection for them. They were quarrelsome, stupid, and demanding; the best thing about a chicken was the way it tasted fried. She'd often snapped the necks of a pair like those the sailor held, gutted them with a paring knife, and had them ready to scald the feathers for plucking in less than a minute.

But the thought of cutting the birds' throats just to pour their blood out made her skin crawl and her stomach turn. She didn't even like the idea of reboarding the ship in the morning and knowing where the wind that drove it came from.

Her eyes focused. She'd walked into the midst of the Blood Eagles. Ningir put out a hand toward her, but Wainer waved him back silently.

Nonnus was alert, but he watched Sharina only peripherally. She glanced over her shoulder and saw Asera and the wizard going into the shelter while the sailor with the chickens waited to follow. The hermit relaxed slightly.

Sharina felt sudden hot anger. Was she completely a child who had to be protected from a spindly boy she could have broken over her knee?

She knew the reaction was unjustified, a displacement of her formless disgust at Meder's blood magic, but she felt it nonetheless. She glared at Nonnus, then turned to the Blood Eagles' officer and said in a clear voice, "Your name is Wainer, I believe? I have some questions to ask you in private."



A soldier snickered, then swallowed his reaction in a cough as Wainer glared at him. Wainer's expression cleared to neutrality and he said, "If you like, mistress. I think if we go downwind, we can speak and stay in plain sight so nobody misunderstands."

Sharina nodded and strode briskly beyond the limits of the scattered encampment. She glanced over her shoulder. Nonnus watched without expression, but he didn't follow. (99–100)

Sitting by her dying husband's bedside, Ronica Vestrit, the matriarch of a once-powerful Liveship trader family from Bingtown, reflects on her grief, her husband, and the maid Rache in Hobb's *Ship of Magic*:

Ephron Vestrit was dying. Ronica looked at her husband's diminished face and impressed the thought on her mind. Ephron Vestrit was dying. She felt a wave of anger, followed by one of annoyance with him. How could he do this to her? How could he die now and leave her to handle everything by herself?

Somewhere beneath the tides of those superficial emotions she knew the cold deep current of her grief sought to pull her down and drown her. She fought savagely to be free of it, fought to keep feeling only the anger and irritation. Later, she told herself. Later, when I have pulled through this and have done all the things I must do, then I will stop and feel. Later.

For now she folded her lips tight in exasperation. She dipped a cloth in the warm balsam-scented water, and gently wiped first his face and then his lax hands. He stirred lightly under her ministrations, but did not waken. She had not expected him to. She'd given him the poppy syrup twice today already, to try to keep the pain at bay. Perhaps for now, the pain had no control over him. She hoped so.

She wiped gently at his beard again. That clumsy Rache had let him dribble broth all over himself again. It was as if the woman just didn't care to do things properly. Ronica supposed she should just send her back to Davad Restart; she hated to, for the woman was young and intelligent. Surely she did not deserve to end up as a slave.

Davad had simply brought the woman to her house one day. Ronica had assumed she was a relative or guest of Davad, for when she was not staring sorrowfully at nothing, her genteel diction and manners had suggested she was well-born. Ronica had been shocked when Davad had bluntly offered the woman to her as a servant, saying he dared not keep her in his own household. He'd never fully explained that statement, and Rache refused to say anything at all on the topic. Ronica supposed that if she sent Rache back to Davad, he would shrug and send her on to Chalced to be sold as a slave. While she remained in Bingtown, she was nominally an indentured servant. She still had a chance to regain a life of her own, if she would but try. Instead Rache was simply refusing to adapt to her changed status. She obeyed the orders she was given, but not with anything like grace or goodwill.

In fact, as the weeks passed, it seemed to Ronica that Rache had become more and more grudging in her duties. Yesterday Ronica had asked her to take charge of Selden for the day, and the woman had looked stricken. Her grandson was only seven, but the woman seemed to have a strange aversion to him. She had shaken her head, fiercely and mutely, her eyes lowered, until Ronica had ordered her off to the kitchen instead. Perhaps she was seeing how far she could push her new mistress before Ronica ordered her punished. Well, she'd find that Ronica Vestrit was not the kind of woman who ordered her servants beaten or their rations reduced. If Rache could not find it within herself to accept living comfortably in a well-appointed house with relatively light duties and a gentle mistress, well, then, she would have to go back to Davad, and eventually take her place on the block and see what fate dealt her next. That was all there was to it. A shame, for the woman had promise.

A shame, too, that despite Davad's kindness in offering Rache's services to her, the Old Trader was perilously close to becoming a slave dealer. She had never thought to see one of the old family lines enticed into such a scurrilous trade. Ronica shook her head, and put both Rache and Davad out of her mind. She had other, more important things to think of beside Rache's sour temperament and Davad's dabbling in semi-legal professions.

After all, Ephron was dying. (50–51)

Despite differences in technique and style, all three narratives clearly operate primarily through restricted perspective, and thus share figural narration as their main narrative paradigm.

Despite the upsurge of figural narratives, authorial narration has not disappeared from the modern fantasy arena. The authorial paradigm survives, for the most part, in the works of established authors who began writing fantasy before the proliferation of figural fantasy in the 1990s. This is not the case with all such authors, of course, as the extracts from Brooks illustrate. Eddings (along with his wife Leigh) and Feist, however, are among those whose narrative poetics, at least in terms of narrative situation, have changed very little over the years.

Much like *Pawn of Prophecy*, David and Leigh Eddings's<sup>21</sup> *The Redemption of Althalus* (2000) is a covertly authorial narrative that maintains a relatively close focus on a single protagonist, in this case Althalus, yet remains figurally inaccessible. As with Garion, Althalus's subjective perspective is rarely evoked through internal focalization, pronounced or otherwise. The narrator's perspective also goes unmarked, although the narration is frequently undercut by a kind of authorial or reflectorized sympathy for the protagonist typical of the Eddingses. In general, the narrator is more concerned with story and plot than any solid or serious representation of figural consciousness. As a result, such representations tend to be lightweight and shallow. Neutrally toned psychonarration is the norm, whereas FID is infrequent and often only seemingly empathic. The authorial orientation, and the overarching psychological distance to

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<sup>21</sup> Leigh Eddings, David Eddings's wife, is the co-author of all the Eddings novels, and was first acknowledged as such in *Belgarath the Sorcerer* (1995).

character are augmented by two further phenomena: the summative quality of the narration, externally focalized as a rule, and the underdeveloped evocation of story space. The narration seldom projects a sense of inhabiting a tangible story world. In this, *The Redemption of Althalus* may well be more authorial than *Pawn of Prophecy*. There are also copious amounts of dialogue that not only overshadow the narration, but also often double for narration. The overall effect, however, remains the same in the two novels: authorial narration that evokes neither the characters' nor the narrator's perspectives in a marked fashion, yet often reflects a light empathy for the former. Here is a brief example:

The wedding day of Albron and Astarell dawned clear and cold. Because of the season, the decorations in the hall were largely limited to evergreen boughs and bright-colored cloth bows.

The traditional bachelor party for Chief Albron the previous evening had left the assorted Clan Chiefs, Sergeants, and visiting nobles feeling a bit delicate that morning, and for some reason Chief Twengor found that vastly amusing.

Alaia had more or less taken charge of the young ladies in the bridal party, whose activities during the week leading up to the wedding had consisted, so far as Althalus could tell, largely of dressmaking and giggling.

Chief Gweti and the ancient Chief Delur had journeyed to Albron's hall for the ceremony, since the wedding of a Clan Chief traditionally required the presence of all the Chiefs of Arum. Gweti largely kept to himself during the festivities. Andine's decision *not* to loot the city of Kanthon had put the pinch-faced Chief's nose out of joint, and he obviously found scant reason to celebrate.

The ceremony was scheduled for noon. Althalus gathered that this was an ancient Arum custom—designed primarily to give the celebrants time to recover from the previous evening's entertainments, and *not* to interfere too much with the postceremony celebration. Arums appeared to take their parties very seriously.

There had been a certain amount of religious controversy about the wedding, since the God of the Arums was the mountain God Bherghos, while the Plakands worshiped Kherdhos, the herd God.

"Brother Bheid's going to perform the ceremony," Althalus announced in a tone that ended the discussion rather abruptly.

And so it was that as noon approached, Bheid, garbed in his black priestly robe, stood at the front of Albron's central hall with Chief Albron, Sergeant Khalor, and Chief Kreuter awaiting the entrance of the bride and her attendants, Andine and Leitha. (Eddings, *Redemption* 588–89)

The passage is only flimsily anchored to Althalus. His name is evoked thrice, and his thoughts twice, suggesting that the narrative information, while not filtered through his consciousness, is at least nominally restricted to what he is privy to. The passage also

showcases the faint, affable reflectorization, temporal condensation, and minimal story space detail typical of the narrative.

*Flight of the Nighthawks* (2004), the first volume in Feist's new *Darkwar* series, employs roughly the same formal arrangement as *Magician: Apprentice*. For the most part, the narration is neutrally toned and reportorial, displaying neither markedly authorial nor markedly figural tendencies. Focalization on characters' thoughts and emotions is frequent, although usually superficial, and tends to serve drama and exposition rather than serious, empathic figurality. Despite the overall neutral cast, the narrator repeatedly indulges in authorial tactics, namely unhindered focalization-shifts, collective focalization, and extensive exposition. Compared to its predecessor, the novel incorporates perhaps a touch more figural perspectivism, yet it also juggles a larger cast of characters, resulting in quantitatively less focus on individual minds. The following extract encapsulates this approach in microcosm form. The extract depicts Caleb and Marie exchange marriage vows as their two sons, Tad and Zane, Caleb's parents, Pug and Miranda, and Caleb's older brother, Magnus, stand witness:

Pug and Miranda stood to one side, and watched their youngest son and the woman he loved exchange their vows before Father DeMonte, the local Priest of Killian whose tiny church served the Stardock region.

Magnus stood a few feet behind his parents, studying his younger brother with a mixture of pleasure and envy. That Caleb could find a little joy in the dark world they inhabited pleased Magnus enormously.

Pug was impressed by how much had been done in so short a time. Garlands of blooms hung from a lattice of grape-stakes constructed by some local boys under Tad's direction. Zane had organized the food and drink, and the tables around the town square were loaded. Once word of the wedding had passed through the town, the local women had pitched in with freshly-baked goods and preserves, and by sundown it was – as Caleb had predicted – a full-blown festival.

Tad and Zane stood on Marie's side of the square, behind the three women who were standing with her. They glanced at Ellie and Grame Hodover who stood watching silently. Ellie smiled back at the boys who noted her swelling stomach and silently agreed that fate had put them on a better path than they had anticipated.

Spending a few minutes with Ellie during the course of the afternoon had restored the balance of their lives, and she was once again like their sister. Grame, as always, was a self-important bore, and neither Tad nor Zane could understand what Ellie saw in him, but as she loved him they decided that was a good enough reason to put up with the pompous fool.

When the priest had finished and the crowd had cheered, Pug motioned for the boys to come over and join them. He whispered something to his wife and she nodded. Miranda turned her attention to Marie, and as Pug led the boys off to the side of the crowd, Pug felt a

faint pang. Marie looked older than Miranda. She would grow to be an old woman while Pug, Miranda and probably Magnus would remain unchanged. What would become of Caleb wasn't clear. There were aspects to his son's nature that no one else understood, or even suspected, save perhaps Nakor. Pug had realized years ago that it was futile to try and keep anything the Isalani found interesting a secret. (Feist, *Flight* 165–67)

Most of the passage focuses on what selected characters are thinking and feeling and perceiving. However, there is little psychological depth to this, and apart from a couple of small touches of collective subjectivity in the fifth paragraph, the passage evokes no sense of figurality. Here, as elsewhere in the novel, the narration seems to have little time to delve deeply into figural consciousness. The incessant focus on story and plot make solid figural narration a negligible consideration. Feist, like the Eddingses, is content with producing literally just more of the same.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

Beyond the emergence and proliferation of figural fantasy narratives, the above outline also suggests two further trends that characterize the genre and its development. First, there seem to be no prominent narrator personas in modern fantasy. Narrators may be authorial, their authorial privileges may be pronounced, and their language mannered, yet the narrators themselves rarely materialize as distinct personas, that is, as maximally overt narrators who refer to themselves, or comment on the act of narration. Even the most authorially oriented classics of modern fantasy tend to steer clear of prototypical authorial narration as defined by Stanzel (see section 1.4. above). Moreover, the narrator persona has disappeared almost entirely from today's authorial fantasy. These narratives are authorial because they lack sustained internal focalization, because of the neutral cast of the narration, or because they employ implicitly authorial techniques such as consecutive focalization and overt exposition. However, the authorial narrator still lingers in modern fantasy.

Second, modern fantasy has become increasingly character-driven, with round and realistically portrayed characters slowly infiltrating the ranks of paper-thin superheroes and flat archetypes typical of traditional, more story-driven fantasy. This is not to say that authorial narration as such is intrinsically less suited for realistic characterization than figural narration, or that figural narration automatically produces psychologically complex characters. However, in the case of modern fantasy literature, there is a clear correlation between authorial narration and paper-thin characterization on the one hand, and between figural narration and realistic characterization on the other. Flat characters are no strangers to figural fantasy narratives, of course, but the general correlations are there. In addition, I do not mean to suggest that modern fantasy literature is no longer story-driven. Rather, story and plot, while still tantamount to fantasy narratives, have become less absolute and restrictive in their authority. This is particularly apparent in Hobb and Martin.

It bears repeating that the above outline is merely a rough sketch. It is meant to suggest a certain kind of development, not to prove it. Sixteen texts, no matter how representative a selection, is hardly sufficient to embody as massive and diverse a genre as modern fantasy. The outline also makes the assumption that the first volume in a series is formally representative of the series as a whole (most modern fantasy novels belong to one series or another). While I consider this a solid assumption to make – I have yet to come across a heterodiegetic fantasy series that significantly alters its overall narrative situation between volumes – the outline does not address it, and it therefore remains something to be verified. It is also assumed that authors who have moved from authorial narration to figural narration do not look back. Again, I am not familiar with a single author who has shifted back to the authorial after discovering the

figural, yet this is certainly a distinct possibility that should be looked into. After all, authors are not as rigid about such categories as literary scholars.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1. Leiber, Martin, and Modern American Fantasy**

To discuss fictional consciousness and its representation(s) is not to discuss what makes modern fantasy a distinct and unique literary form, to be sure. Unlike otherworlds, the representation of consciousness is a feature common to all fictional narratives. It too has its pioneers and champions, of course, but most prose fiction is content with following popular conventions. Modern fantasy is no exception. It is therefore understandable why scholars have opted to devote their time and energy to other facets of fantasy instead: the construction of otherworlds, the liberation of imagination, myth-making for modern times and audiences, the fantastic itself, and so forth. However, while understandable, this is not entirely justifiable. The academic study of modern fantasy literature abounds in abstractions and interpretations of what fantasy is all about, and why it matters, and this is all fine and well as far as it goes. But what is troubling is how little discussion there is on how exactly modern fantasy says what it says. After all, what fantasy is all about, and what it seeks to communicate are mediated through narrative technique and language. For example, this thesis shows that what a fantasy narrative can do with its otherworld is fundamentally contingent on where and how the narrator situates the narrative perspective. Authorial narrators and reflector characters clearly focalize their worlds in different ways, and with different results. The representation of consciousness may seem like a transparent layer between text and meaning, but to treat it as such is to overlook a central aspect of narrative meaning-making.

The representation of consciousness is at the heart of the shift from authorial narration toward figural narration. To study this shift, and thus fictional consciousness, can only further our understanding of modern fantasy as a literary genre. Indeed, we can



already tentatively link the more complex and immersive characterization emerging in much recent heterodiegetic fantasy to internal focalization in general, and to figurally motivated forms of psychonarration and free indirect discourse in particular. This new focus on character and consciousness cannot but also realign that which distinguishes fantasy: the fantastic. Moreover, by studying the more formal aspects of narration, rather than the traditional thematic and ontological ones that help identify fantasy as distinct and unique, we can show that the genre includes much technically sophisticated writing. In short, we can promote a new literary appreciation of the genre by showing that there is more to fantasy than the fantastic. Martin, for example, combines gripping storytelling and a subtle handling of fantastic elements with a deft and precise use of such techniques as restricted perspective and empathic FID.

As this thesis demonstrates, there is a clear shift in narrative situation between Leiber's *The Swords of Lankhmar* and Martin's *A Game of Thrones*. The former is an authorial narrative that nonetheless incorporates a healthy dose of figural narration. The figurality is neither extensive nor strong enough to qualify the novel as authorial-figural, yet it does anticipate a new narrative paradigm. Leiber, after all, was among the first to introduce a new kind of figural realism into modern fantasy (see section 1.3. above). Martin's novel, in turn, is a solid figural narrative. The figural narrative situation is not always marked, but it dominates the novel all the same. The historical outline in Chapter 4 broadly traces this same shift in technique. While the present thesis does not prove the shift, it does suggest it in no uncertain terms: all eighteen modern fantasy narratives discussed on the preceding pages are representative works by major authors. My audacious assumption remains to be validated, but now the fundamental shift in the way figural consciousness and experience are represented in modern American fantasy has at least been noted.

## 5.2. Problems and Future Considerations

The present thesis suffers from a few limitations, some of which I have already commented on. The most obvious one is the conflict between the ambitious scope of the thesis and the relatively small number of works discussed in it. My theoretical framework has also been trimmed down. Of the five orientational components of focalization distinguished by Rimmon-Kenan the foregoing analysis addresses only three. Even though this is sufficient for Leiber and Martin, as the two narratives employ focalization fairly consistently across the board, there are works that exhibit perspectival discrepancies between the five components. Terry Goodkind's *The Sword of Truth* novels (1994–), for example, are figurally narrated, yet begin to adopt a didactic cast as the series develops: in its ideological orientation, the focalization in the novels begins to gravitate toward an external moral perspective that overshadows all others (Randian Objectivism mixed with Goodkind's own brand of rational-heroic egoism). Brooks's *The Scions of Shannara* betrays a similar, albeit lighter, touch of authorial didacticism on a figural canvas (see page 123 above). Such works clearly require a different treatment in terms of focalization than either Leiber or Martin.

Beyond focalization as such, I have also excluded other relevant or overlapping narrative phenomena from the analysis: authorial utterances, narrative preliminaries, characters and characterization, description, and so forth. Exposition, for its part, merits a much more comprehensive treatment than what I have been able to afford it here. All these phenomena function differently in authorial and figural narratives, and therefore qualify as potentially fruitful areas for analysis. However, it should be noted that a full narratological analysis of the inward turn in modern fantasy is almost certainly beyond any single study. Moreover, if the aim is simply to prove the inward turn, such a broad analysis is also unnecessary.

Another potential problem in this thesis is its narrow generic scope: all the fantasy narratives discussed here belong to a subgenre of modern fantasy variously dubbed *Epic Fantasy*, *Heroic Fantasy*, *High Fantasy*, *Quest Fantasy*, *Sword and Sorcery*, and *Tolkienian Fantasy*. This single subgenre hardly represents the breadth and depth of modern fantasy writing. Then again, it is by far the largest and most popular subgenre in the field, and, as such, embodies its mainstream. Furthermore, as I note in the Introduction, the narrative situation and the inward turn are phenomena that I believe mostly transcend subgeneric differences in modern fantasy literature. The works discussed in this thesis may not comprise a generically broad selection, but they nevertheless provide a generically representative one. Still, a broader range of works, including experimental and marginal ones, could better help establish the formal borders of the genre, and the extent of the inward turn thus far.

There are at least two ways in which the present study can be extended. First, a comparative formal analysis of a larger (and generically broader) corpus of works is required to fully flesh out the shift in narrative technique that this thesis suggests. The corpus should also be expanded to cover Anglo-American fantasy at large, since the British and American traditions are inextricably interlinked in any case. The structural approach taken in this thesis could be maintained: a close analysis of a small selection of works combined with a summary analysis of a much larger one. To my mind, this offers the best compromise between in-depth analysis and a representative quantity of source texts. Second, the literary and literary historical reasons for the shift need to be considered in order to establish a broader context for the inward turn. The key question is why did the shift start as late as it did, given that the conventions of figural narration were fully developed more than half a century earlier? What prompted fantasy authors to finally embrace figural narrative techniques? This thesis already suggests one answer:

a more realistic conception of character. And what held the authors back? The canonical influence of such authorial giants as Tolkien and Howard surely must have played a part. One might also ask if fantastic otherworlds are inherently better suited to authorial presentation. Story world exposition, for example, clearly presents less of a challenge for authorial narrators, who possess greater representational freedom than the narrators of figural narratives. These inquiries can be further extended by discussing the effects of the shift on modern fantasy and its possible future developments within the genre.

For now, however, we have the first study of the inward turn in modern fantasy literature, which, despite its limitations, makes a strong case for a narrative paradigm shift on a broader generic scale. Further studies can, I believe, only add to this.

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